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GENERAL EDITOR : A. W. STREANE, D.D.

THE BOOKS
OF
EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

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EDITED BY

HERBERT EDWARD RYLE, D.D.

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Cambridge
at the University Press
1911

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HERBERT EDWARD RYLE, D.D.

First Edition 1897.

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* * The Text adopted in this edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. In the notes, the renderings of the Revised Version of 1885 are printed in Clarendon type.

ABBREVIATIONS.

A.V.	Authorised Version of 1611.
R.V.	Revised Version of 1885.
Heb.	The original Hebrew.
Sept. or LXX.	The Septuagint.
Targ.	The Targum.
Vulg.	The Vulgate.
Lit.	Literally.

FOR the preparation of this little book I am indebted to Miss MARY DYSON HORT, who, writing under my supervision, has with great patience and skill adapted the Introduction and abridged the Notes of my larger Commentary, to meet the requirements of the present series.

H. E. R.

THE LODGE,
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Oct. 20, 1897.

INTRODUCTION

Title. Ezra and Nehemiah formed in the Hebrew Bible but one book, with the title "Ezra," just as Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles ranked each as one book in the Hebrew Scriptures; while in the Greek and Latin Bibles each of these three books was divided into two portions, called respectively First and Second. In the same way, the Fathers of the early Christian Church spoke of the "First and Second Books of Ezra," and the title of "Nehemiah" was not given to the second book till the days of Jerome. In the English Bibles these books were at first called "The First and Second of Ezra" (or "Esdras"), but by the end of the 16th century the titles "Ezra" and "Nehemiah," used at first as alternatives only, had been generally adopted.

Subject. The period of history covered by these books comprises about 106 years, though they also contain references (inserted probably at the time of compilation) to events outside this period. The period itself refers mainly to two great epochs in the history of the Jewish nation, divided by a gap of nearly 60 years. These epochs may be thus summarised—(1) The Return from Captivity and the Rebuilding of the Temple. (2) The Reforms of Ezra and the Government of Nehemiah.

These two books must be regarded as preserving for us a series of incidents illustrative of the beginnings of Judaism, rather than as furnishing a continuous narrative.

Analysis of Ezra and Nehemiah.

- [A. The Restoration (Ezra i.—vi. omitting iv. 7—24).
B. The Foundation of Judaism (Ezra vii.—x., iv. 7—24; Neh. i.—xiii.).]

- (A) I. *The Return under Zerubbabel.* 538—516 B.C.
- (a) The Decree and Return. Ezra i. ii.
 - (b) Dedication of the Altar. Temple Foundations laid. Ezra iii.
 - (c) Samaritan Opposition. Cessation of the Work. Ezra iv. 1—6.
 - (d) Resumption of the Work. Completion of the Temple. Ezra v. vi.
- (B) II. *The Return under Ezra.* 458—457 B.C.
- (a) Ezra's Genealogy, Commission, and Thank-giving. Ezra vii.
 - (b) The Journey and Arrival. Ezra viii.
 - (c) The People's Guilt and Ezra's Confession. Ezra ix.
 - (d) The Covenant, Assembly, and Reform. Ezra x.
- III. *Period of Hostility and Persecution.* 456—445 B.C.
- Ezra iv. 7—24.
- IV. *Nehemiah's First Visit to Jerusalem.* 445—444 B.C.
- (a) Nehemiah's Grief and Prayer. Neh. i.
 - (b) The Commission, Arrival, and Night Circuit. Neh. ii.
 - (c) Rebuilding of the Walls begun. Neh. iii.
 - (d) Opposition without the city. Difficulties within. Neh. iv. v.
 - (e) Unsuccessful Plots. Completion of the Walls. Neh. vi.
 - (f) Register of Zerubbabel's Company. Neh. vii.
- V. *Religious Reforms.* 445—444 B.C.
- (a) Public Reading of the Law. Feast of Tabernacles. Neh. viii.
 - (b) National Confession. Neh. ix.
 - (c) The Great Covenant and its Obligations. Neh. x.
- VI. *Miscellaneous.* 444 B.C.
- (a) Registers and Lists. Neh. xi.—xii. 26.
 - (b) Dedication of the Walls. Organisation of Levites. Neh. xii. 27—47.
 - (c) Separation from the Heathen. Neh. xiii. 1—3.

VII. *Nehemiah's Second Visit.* 432 B.C.

(a) Nehemiah's Acts. Neh. xiii. 4—28.

- | | |
|---|--|
| { | 1. Cleanses the Temple. |
| | 2. Provides for the Levites. |
| | 3. Enforces observance of the Sabbath. |
| | 4. Denounces mixed marriages. |

(b) Concluding Prayer. Neh. xiii. 29—31.

Structure.

1. *Characteristics of Style.* Abrupt transitions in narrative and subject; intermittent usage of 1st person; insertion of Aramaic passages; lists introduced without apparent reference to context; names inserted without explanation, as if they had already occurred.

2. *Materials used by Compiler.* (a) Personal Memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah. (b) Official lists. (c) Extracts from Aramaic documents. (d) A contemporary chronicle. (e) The Compiler's own writing.

(a) *Ezra's Writing* characterised by the use of 1st pers. sing.; by certain phrases (e.g. "the good hand of our God upon us"); details of time and place (e.g. "river that runneth to Ahava," "12th day of the first month"); descriptions of acts of worship; the mention of "males" in the list viii. 3—14.

Nehemiah's Writing characterised by the use of 1st pers. sing.; by its vigorous and distinct style; by certain recurring phrases ("my God," "the rulers and the nobles," etc.).

(b) *Official Lists* modified or abridged by the Compiler. (Ezra i. 9—11, ii. 1—70, x. 20—44; Neh. iii. vii. 6—73; x. 1—27, xi. 3—36, xii. 1—26.)

(c) *Aramaic Extracts*—consisting of official letters and explanatory narrative probably taken by the Compiler from an Aramaic history, and adapted freely by him. (Ezra iv. 8—vi. 18, vii. 12—26.)

(d) This section (Neh. vii. 73—x.) interrupts the Memoirs of Nehemiah and is written in a wholly different style. Nehemiah is only mentioned twice, and then by a new title. It is probably taken from some contemporary chronicle.

(e) The portions in these books *not* taken from the above sources are probably the work of the Compiler himself; in style and language his writing closely resembles that of the Compiler of Chronicles, with whom therefore he may very possibly be identified.

Date and Authorship. The contents of the last paragraph show that these two books could not have been written at any one time, but are a compilation from various sources, and it is not easy to assign a date even to the compilation. Neh. xii. 26 and 47 show that the Compiler considered Nehemiah's days as 'past history,' while Neh. xii. 10, 11, 22, prove that by that time (i.e. at the date of compilation) at least two generations had succeeded that of Nehemiah; for Eliashib (v. 10) was High Priest in the former's days [432 B.C.], and Jaddua (v. 11) held the same office as late as 333¹ B.C. (See also in Neh. xii. 22 the mention of 'Darius the Persian,' who was probably Darius Codomannus [336—330 B.C.].)

The most definite indication therefore of the date of compilation is to be found in these verses of Neh. xii., which (if accepted as they now stand in the text) prove that it cannot have been *earlier* than 320 B.C., while it was very possibly *later*, as Darius did not die till 330 B.C., and the Compiler is evidently speaking from the stand-point of subsequent history.

It seems certain, both from the style and matter of these books, that neither Ezra nor Nehemiah could have been their Compiler, though the unknown editor must have freely used the writings of both. The theory that the Compiler of Chronicles was also the Compiler of Ezra and Nehemiah has of late years gained ground amongst commentators, and is now considered very probable by many. In general character, historical treatment, and literary style the books closely resemble each other, while the resemblance between them is most noticeable in those passages which are the Compiler's own work.

In Chronicles we find extracts from other sources, genealogical and other lists, careful descriptions of religious festivals and rites, prominence given to Levites and the Temple staff generally, and all these points are characteristic also of Ezra and Nehemiah; while such phrases as 'heads of fathers' houses,' 'people of the countries,' 'the house of God,' etc., only occur in the Bible in these books and in Chronicles.

¹ The date 333 is the only one in connection with Jaddua that we can regard as a certainty, for Josephus narrates that in that year Alexander the Great passed along the borders of Palestine on his way into Egypt, and he even describes a dramatic but not very probable meeting between the conqueror and the high-priest Jaddua at Jerusalem. The other dates—of Jaddua's term of office, etc.—are purely conjectural.

Outline of History. The Decree of Cyrus [538 B.C.], which is the starting-point of the history covered by these two books, was the politic measure of a wise conqueror. Cyrus, king of Elam and Persia, had just become master also of Babylon, and it was to his own interest to conciliate as far as possible the tribes over whom he was now to rule. He therefore allowed many of those whom the kings of Babylon had transported, to return to their own countries, taking with them their sacred images. Amongst the captives thus set free were the Jews, and to them the king showed special favour, commanding them to rebuild the temple of their God, and aiding them by gifts to accomplish this duty. Cyrus by such acts hoped to please not only the subject tribes but also the gods whom they served, for he was himself a polytheist and wished to propitiate all the deities worshipped throughout his vast empire.

Sheshbazzar, the Jewish prince (probably identical with Zerubbabel, Ezra ii. 2; Zech. iv. 6), led the band of exiles back to Jerusalem and the villages round, and was evidently made provincial governor by the Persian king. Soon after their arrival ("in the seventh month") the Jews set up the altar of burnt offering for the daily sacrifices, and in the second year began to lay the foundations of the Temple. The work was however hindered by the Samaritans, a mixed community consisting chiefly of Assyrian colonists and Jews who had never gone into exile, but had been corrupted by intercourse with the heathen nations around. The returned exiles, striving to keep their little community pure from the least stain of idolatry and to restore the true worship of Jehovah in its most ideal form, could not accept the offers of help which the Samaritans at first put forward. The latter in consequence became most bitter and jealous foes, and by representing the Jews to the Persian officials as rebellious subjects, likely to become dangerous if unchecked, they succeeded in getting the rebuilding of the Temple forcibly stopped for ten years or more. The work was therefore hindered during the reign of Cyrus [from 536 onwards], was stationary through the reigns of Cambyses [529—522] and Gomates [522], and was only resumed in the 2nd year of Darius I. [522] when Haggai and Zechariah moved the people to fresh efforts, and the king, having discovered the Edict of his predecessor, Cyrus, not only permitted the building to be continued, but made

liberal grants towards the expenses. In 516 the Temple was finished and dedicated with solemn services. Then followed nearly 60 years during which we know little or nothing of the history of the community at Jerusalem. Ezra iv. 6 gives us a brief reference to Samaritan hostility in the reign of Xerxes [485—465], but otherwise this period is passed over in complete silence by the Chronicler. For Persia it was an epoch of stirring events and great calamities, ending in the overthrow of the Persian power in Greece. It was during these sixty years that such great battles as those of Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea, were fought, and it is to this period therefore that belong the world-famous names of Leonidas, Themistocles and Pausanias; while we cannot forget that its last decade saw the birth of Socrates.

In Jerusalem during this long interval the priestly power had been growing ever more and more prominent, while many abuses had crept into the community, which half a century earlier would not have been tolerated. The priests now went so far as to encourage intermarriage with the heathen, in their desire to strengthen the position of the nation at all costs; and in proportion as their ambition increased so did their zeal for the worship of Jehovah grow less. The poor were oppressed by the rich, the Sabbath was profaned, and many abuses cried out for reform by the time that Ezra, the Priest and Scribe, appeared at Jerusalem supported by a company of returned exiles, and bringing with him a commission from Artaxerxes I. [458 B.C.]. The Persian monarch's favour may have been merely politic, for in this year he was troubled by the revolt of Egypt, and perhaps he wished to conciliate his subjects on the western frontier, and to secure the fidelity of his province of Judea.

Ezra on arrival at once plunged into the question of reform, and began by insisting upon the banishment of all the foreign wives. This was a measure of which the extreme severity was justified by the aim of the reformer, his one object being to preserve the purity of the 'holy nation' at a very critical time. Another gap in the history here follows, probably of not less than 12 years; but some light is thrown on the period by Ezra iv. 7—24. Probably Ezra, having carried out his reforms, next sought to strengthen the position of the nation still further by attempting to restore the walls

and fortifications of the city. But the foes he had made by his severe measures, both in the city and among the tribes around, now combined against him, and, as formerly in the days of Cyrus, so now again in the days of Artaxerxes I., complaints were made at head-quarters by the Samaritans and their allies, and the king stopped the work on the ground that to fortify the city was an act of treason and rebellion. The command was executed with violence (Ezra iv. 23) by Ezra's enemies, and the Scribe himself was probably forced to retire for a time to escape their fury. Some little time later the royal cupbearer, Nehemiah, being a favourite with Artaxerxes, obtained a reversal of the decree, and in 445 arrived at Jerusalem as governor, armed with a fresh commission from the king, carrying letters to various Persian officials, and even protected by a body-guard of Persian soldiers. Nehemiah also was bent on reform, and he too met with opposition from the Samaritans and their friends within the city. He first finished the walls (in 52 days) and dedicated them with a solemn service. He then abolished the practice of usury, restored mortgaged property to its original owners, and increased the number of residents in Jerusalem, for the further protection of the city. His most important act was the publication of the Law, till then wholly in the hands of the priests, but now for the first time read openly to all the people (by Ezra, at Nehemiah's command), and henceforward it became the standard by which every Jew regulated his life. The nation also bound itself by a covenant to observe the Law, and special reference was made to five of its more important obligations (Neh. x.). After apparently 12 years of governorship (Neh. v. 14), Nehemiah returned to his duties at the court of Susa, but we are not told for how long a time he remained there. During his absence the old abuses at Jerusalem cropped up again, until at length he obtained leave to visit the city once more [? 432] and took summary measures to redress the evils that had reappeared. With energy and righteous anger the zealous reformer cleansed the Temple from pollution, made provision for the Levites, enforced afresh the strict observance of the Sabbath, and denounced in no measured terms the 'mixed marriages' which still defiled the holy nation.

The narrative here ends abruptly with one of the brief ejaculatory prayers that are so characteristic of Nehemiah.

LIST OF PERSIAN KINGS

<i>King</i>	<i>Duration of Reign</i>	<i>Mentioned in Ezra-Nehemiah</i>
1. Cyrus	559—529	Ezra i., iv. 1—5, v. 13—17, vi. 3—5
2. { Cambyzes	529—522	[not mentioned in Scripture]
3. { Pseudo-Smerdis or Gomates	522—521	
4. Darius I.	521—485	Ezra iv. 5, 24, v. 6, 7, vi. 1—14
5. Xerxes I. (Ahasuerus)	485—465	Ezra iv. 6
6. Artaxerxes I. Longimanus	465—425	Ezra iv. 7—24, vii.; Neh. ii., xiii. 6
[Six kings here follow who do not appear in these books— their reigns cover the period 424—335.]		
13. Darius III. Codomannus	336—330	Neh. xii. 22

LIST OF HIGH PRIESTS

Jeshua, the son of Jozadak	Ezra i.—vi.
Joiakim	Neh. xii. 10, 26
Eliashib	Neh. iii. 1, xiii. 4
Joiada	Neh. xii. 10, 22
Jonathan or Johanan	Neh. xii. 11, 22
Jaddua	Neh. xii. 11, 22

EZRA

PART I. CHAPS. I.-VI. THE RETURN UNDER ZERUBBABEL.

i. 1-4. *The Decree of Cyrus.*

1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, ² Thus

PART I. CHAPS. I.-VI. THE RETURN UNDER ZERUBBABEL.

Ch. i. 1-4. *The Decree of Cyrus.*

Cyrus, the founder of a new dynasty and conqueror of Babylon, was anxious to bind together his newly-made empire, and therefore sought to win the loyalty of the subject races who had been transplanted to Babylon, by allowing them to return to their homes, carrying back their gods, whom he thus hoped to propitiate in all parts of his vast kingdom. This policy explains the permission here granted to the Jews (1) to return to Jerusalem, (2) to rebuild their Temple, and carry back the sacred vessels.

1-3. These verses are identical with the two which close the II. Book of Chronicles (II. Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23). Probably Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah was originally a single book, the work of one compiler (see Introd., pp. 9, 10).

1. *Now*] The use of this word in the first sentence of the book shows that i. 1 is but the continuation of a history already half-told (i.e. in the preceding book of Chron.). *the first year of Cyrus*] probably 538 B.C., the year when Cyrus conquered Babylon. He had been king of Elam for 20 years, and of Persia for 10, but is here called 'King of Persia' because that country was the most important of his conquests. *by the mouth of Jeremiah*] Jer. xxix. 10. The "70 years" here spoken of may be counted *exactly* from 608, or in *round numbers* from one of the three great Babylonian inroads. *fulfilled*] R.V. **accomplished.** *all his kingdom*] i.e. Elam, Media, Persia, Lydia, Babylon. *saying*] The decree was in

saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. ³Who *is there* among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (*he is the God,*) which *is* in Jerusalem. ⁴And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill offering for the house of God that *is* in Jerusalem.

5-11. *The Return.*

⁵Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all

Aramaic or Persian, and we have here the translated popular version.

2. *the LORD God of heaven*] R.V. **the Lord, the God of heaven.** Cyrus here uses the Jewish sacred name ('Jahveh' or 'Jehovah'), but this is no proof that he himself worshipped the God of the Jews. We now know from the Inscriptions that he was a polytheist, and from political motives served the gods of his many subject kingdoms, hoping thus to secure the favour and protection of each special deity. The title 'God of heaven' implied boundless power. *hath charged me*] unconsciously fulfilling Is. xliv. 24-28, xlv. 1-13. *Jerusalem, which is in Judah*] The small Jewish province would not be known all over the vast Persian Empire. The edict refers only to the Southern kingdom, depopulated by Nebuchadnezzar.

3. *his God be with him*] a common form of blessing. Cf. 'Good-bye' (God be with ye). *he is the God*] a Jewish parenthesis inserted by the compiler.

4. *whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth*] R.V. **whosoever is left**..... i.e. wherever survivors of the Captivity were found, their neighbours in those places were to help them with money and cattle. *besides the freewill offering*] i.e. voluntary gifts for the Temple. Cf. Exod. xxxv. 29; Lev. xxii. 23.

5-11. *The Return.*

5. *the chief of the fathers*] R.V. **the heads of fathers' houses.** *had raised*] R.V. **had stirred up.**

them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem. ⁶And all *they that were* about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all *that* was willingly offered. ⁷Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; ⁸even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. ⁹And this *is* the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives, ¹⁰thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, *and* other vessels a thousand. ¹¹All the vessels of gold and of silver *were* five thousand and four hundred. All *these*

6. *And all they that were about them*] i.e. both heathen and Jewish neighbours. *strengthened their hands*] Cf. Neh. ii. 18.

7. *the vessels of the house of the LORD*] See II. Kings xxiv. 13. This capture took place in 598 B.C. *in the house of his gods*] The Heb. word (Elohim) may be also rendered 'god'—and probably the sing. should be used here, as Nebuchadnezzar paid special honour to Merodach, above all other gods.

8. *Mithredath*] the Heb. form of the Persian Mithridates. *the treasurer*] a Persian word, 'gizbar,' the royal purse-bearer. *Sheshbazzar*] probably to be identified with Zerubbabel (iii. 2, iv. 3, v. 2) which may have been the name he took as prince among his own people, while Sheshbazzar was his name at the Persian Court. *the prince of Judah*] the 'nasi' of Judah, a Heb. title given to him either as head of the tribe, or as representative of the House of David.

9. *chargers*] the word thus translated only occurs here in the O.T. It may mean either (1) sacrificial vessels, or (2) wine-coolers, or (3) libation-vessels, or (4) baskets. *knives*] another word only found here: it may mean either (1) censers, or (2) changes of raiment, or (3) ornamented vessels.

11. *All the vessels...five thousand and four hundred*] the total does not agree with the enumeration in vv. 9, 10, and there is probably some copyist's error here. *All these did Sheshbazzar*

did Sheshbazzar bring up with *them* of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

ii. 1-70. *The Register of the Return.*

2 Now these *are* the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city; ²which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispah, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah.

³The number of the men of the people of Israel: the children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy

bring up] No details given of the journey, which must have lasted 3-4 months. Some would insert here the Apocryphal passage I. Esdras v. 1-6.

The Journey. Its course would have been N. and N.W. along the Euphrates by Haran to Carchemish, then S.W. and S. through Hamath, Syria, and Samaria. Ezra's caravan took 4 months (vii. 8, 9).

Ch. ii. 1-70. *The Register of the Return.*

(The same list occurs Neh. vii. 6-73, I. Esdras v. 7-45¹.)

1. *the children of the province*] i.e. of Judah; the phrase is used throughout Ezra and Neh. to describe the Jews living at or near Jerusalem. *Nebuchadnezzar*] whose two chief assaults of Jerusalem were in 598 and 587-6 B.C.

2. *Zerubbabel*] (i.e. 'begotten in Babylon') an Assyrian name—he was the grandson of King Jehoiachin and nephew of Shealtiel. *Jeshua*] (or 'Jehoshua') the High Priest, grandson of Seraiah (II. Kings xxv. 18-21). He is the 'Joshua' of Haggai and Zechariah (Hag. i. 1, 12 etc., Zech. iii. 1, 3, 6 etc.). *Nehemiah*] N.B. not the famous leader. This verse contains a list of representative princes.

3. *The Laity*—arranged under names of clans or houses. The lists in Neh. and Esdras differ in certain details of names and figures, probably owing to copyists' errors.

¹ *Analysis of Register.* A. Laity (3-35). B. Priests (36-39). C. Levites and Temple Servants (40-58). D. Miscellaneous (59-63). E. Sum Total (64-67).

and two. ⁴The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two. ⁵The children of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five. ⁶The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua *and* Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve. ⁷The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. ⁸The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five. ⁹The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore. ¹⁰The children of Bani, six hundred forty and two. ¹¹The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three. ¹²The children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two. ¹³The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six. ¹⁴The children of Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six. ¹⁵The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four. ¹⁶The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight. ¹⁷The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three. ¹⁸The children of Jorah, an hundred and twelve. ¹⁹The children of Hashum, two hundred twenty and three. ²⁰The children of Gibbar, ninety and five. ²¹The children of Beth-lehem, an hundred twenty and three. ²²The men of Netophah, fifty and six. ²³The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight. ²⁴The children of Azmaveth, forty and two. ²⁵The children of Kirjath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three. ²⁶The children of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one. ²⁷The men of Michmas, an hundred twenty and two. ²⁸The men of Beth-el and Ai, two hundred twenty and three. ²⁹The children of Nebo, fifty and two. ³⁰The children of Magbish, an hundred fifty and six. ³¹The children of the other Elam, a thousand two

6. *Pahath-moab*] *Pahath* = 'ruler of.' See I. Chron. iv. 22.

20-35. Names of towns and places. Possibly the List represents some such order as—1st, dwellers in Jerusalem, 2nd, dwellers in places near Jerusalem, 3rd, those in remote places.

25. Gibeonite cities. See Josh. ix. 17.

29. *Nebo*] not the Moabite town, but possibly the same as Nob.

30-32. The text of these *vv.* is corrupt.

hundred fifty and four. ³²The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty. ³³The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and five. ³⁴The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five. ³⁵The children of Senaah, three thousand and six hundred and thirty.

³⁶The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three. ³⁷The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two. ³⁸The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven. ³⁹The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

⁴⁰The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of Hodaviah, seventy and four. ⁴¹The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred twenty and eight. ⁴²The children of the porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, *in all* an hundred thirty and nine.

⁴³The Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth, ⁴⁴the children of Keros, the children of Siaha, the children of Padon,

35. 3630] Nehemiah gives the number as 3930 for this same unknown town of Senaah. Either the number is incorrectly recorded, or other places are included whose names have been omitted.

36. *of the house of Jeshua*] not to be identified with the High Priest.

40. *The Levites*] arranged here as in I. Chron. (1) Levites proper. (2) Singers. (3) Doorkeepers. Cf. the small number of Levites (431) with the 4289 priests.

41. *The singers*] dating from David's time, I. Chron. xv. 17-24. There were then 24 classes of singers, and 3 great guilds called after Heman, Asaph, Jeduthun. Only the Asaph guild returned.

43. *The Nethinims*] R.V. gives the correct Heb. plural, *without* the s. This class is mentioned only in Ezra and Neh. and once in Chron. Jewish tradition identifies them with the Gibeonites (appointed by Joshua to help the Levites, Josh. ix. 3 etc.). Their number was added to from the ranks of captives (Numb. xxxi. 28-30) and they were treated by the Jews with contempt in later times.

⁴⁵the children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub, ⁴⁶the children of Hagab, the children of Shalmali, the children of Hanan, ⁴⁷the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah, ⁴⁸the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam, ⁴⁹the children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, the children of Besai, ⁵⁰the children of Asnah, the children of Mehunim, the children of Nephusim, ⁵¹the children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur, ⁵²the children of Bazluth, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha, ⁵³the children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Thamah, ⁵⁴the children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.

⁵⁵The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Peruda, ⁵⁶the children of Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel, ⁵⁷the children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Ami. ⁵⁸All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred ninety and two.

⁵⁹And these *were* they which went up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, Cherub, Addan, *and* Immer: but they could not shew their fathers' house, and their seed, whether they *were* of Israel: ⁶⁰the children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred fifty and two. ⁶¹And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of

50. *the children of Mehunim*] R.V. **Meunim**. Possibly identical with the Maonites (Judges x. 12), Bedouins S. of the Dead Sea.

55. *The children of Solomon's servants*] i.e. descendants of the original inhabitants of Canaan (Amorites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites and Jebusites), whom Solomon had used as hired bond-servants when building the Temple (I. Kings v. 13).

57. *Pochereth of Zebaim*] R.V. **Pochereth-hazzebalm** = the gazelle-hunter.

Barzillai; which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name: ⁶²these sought their register *among* those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. ⁶³And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy *things* till there stood *up* a priest with Urim and with Thummim.

⁶⁴The whole congregation together *was* forty and two thousand three hundred *and* threescore, ⁶⁵beside their servants and their maids, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and *there were* among them two hundred singing *men* and singing

61. *of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite*] who helped David in his flight from Absalom (I. Kings ii. 7) and whose son Chimham probably founded a family at Beth-lehem (Jer. xli. 17).

62. *these sought their register*] i.e. searched for their genealogy in the priestly book called "The Enrolled."

63. *the Tirshatha*] i.e. Zerubbabel. The Persian title for a provincial governor (cf. 'Pekah' = the Babylonian title); the root of the word means 'to fear.' *the most holy things*] cf. Numb. xviii. 9-11. These comprised the shewbread, the incense, the sin and guilt offering, and the drink offering. A priest thus excluded might not be consecrated (see Ex. xxix.), could not offer sacrifices, or enter the Holy Place. The 'holy things' comprised the thank-offering, the firstlings of herd and flock, the first-fruits, and the tithe, of all of which the priests' families might partake. *Urim and Thummim*] After the Captivity the High Priest never again employed this sacred method of inquiry. The O.T. gives no explanation of its exact nature. The words mean respectively 'Light' and 'Perfection,' and may refer either (a) to the stones of the High Priest's breastplate, or (b) to sacred dice, or (c) to little images of truth and justice, as worn by Egyptian priests.

64. The *sum total* (42,360) is the same in Ezra, Neh. and I. Esdras, but the items vary and do not in any case make up this total. Probably the text has been corrupted by careless copyists.

65. *singing men and singing women*] i.e. hired performers for funerals, feasts etc., distinct from the Levitical guild (v. 41), and belonging to the lowest class of the people. The mention of such here proves that there were wealthy men in the caravan who could afford this luxury.

women. ⁶⁶Their horses *were* seven hundred thirty and six; their mules, two hundred forty and five; ⁶⁷their camels, four hundred thirty and five; *their* asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

⁶⁸And *some* of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the LORD which *is* at Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place: ⁶⁹they gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pound of silver, and one hundred priests' garments. ⁷⁰So the priests, and the Levites, and *some* of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

iii. 1-7. *Building of the Altar. Feast of Tabernacles.*

3 And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. ²Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written

66. *horses*] Here first mentioned as used for peaceful purposes. Another sign of wealth. *mules*] ridden only by the richest class.

67. *camels*] for burdens. *asses*] for the lowest classes.

69. *drams*] R.V. **darics**. A Persian gold coin, the name probably from 'dara' = 'a king,' referring to the figure on one side of the coin (cf. our 'sovereign'). This is the first mention of the name of a coin in O.T. *priests' garments*] i.e. (1) long tunic, (2) mitre or turban, (3) breeches, (4) girdle—all of fine white linen. See Exod. xxviii. 40, xxxix. 27.

Ch. iii. 1-7. *Building of the Altar. Feast of Tabernacles.*

1. *the seventh month*] Tisri, the most sacred in the Jewish Calendar. 1st day, Feast of Trumpets; 10th day, Day of Atonement; 15th day, Feast of Tabernacles. This would be in the first year of the Return.

2. *as it is written*] see Numb. xxix. 1-6. Burnt offerings (1 bullock, 1 ram, 7 lambs).

in the law of Moses the man of God. ³And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear *was* upon them because of the people of *those* countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, *even* burnt offerings morning and evening. ⁴They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and *offered* the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required; ⁵and afterward *offered* the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD. ⁶From the first day of the seventh month **began** they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not *yet* laid. ⁷They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink,

3. *upon his bases*] R.V. **upon its base.** Margin '**in its place**' is probably right. This whole verse is far from clear, owing to the condensed language of the original. By omitting one letter in the Heb., the clause runs 'for the people of the countries were a terror to them'—i.e. the erection of the altar gave them confidence, forming as it did a national rallying-point against the surrounding tribes. For 'morning and evening' sacrifices see Ex. xxix. 38; Num. xxviii. 3-8.

4. *the feast of tabernacles*] Lev. xxiii. 34-42; Deut. xvi. 13-15. The vintage feast, celebrated also in memory of the Wanderings, and henceforth of the Return. Solomon's Temple was dedicated at this feast (Tisri 15), cf. also Neh. viii. 14-16. *the duty of every day*] 13 bullocks on the 1st day, 12 on the 2nd—and so on.

5. *the continual burnt offering*] i.e. daily morning and evening sacrifices. *both of the new moons, and of all...etc.*] R.V. **and the offerings of the new moons, and of all...etc.** The observance of 'new moons' was adopted from the religion of the Semitic races (see Numb. xxviii. 11-15), but was not in the Levitical code. *the set feasts*] i.e. (1) Passover, (2) Feast of Weeks, (3) Feast of Tabernacles (see II. Chron. viii. 13). *freewill offering*] made (1) on great festivals, (2) when any worshipper desired (cf. 'Corban,' St Mark vii. 11; St Matt. v. 23).

7. *meat*] the old English expression for 'food.' *of Zidon and...of Tyre*] following Solomon's example I. Kings v. 6-12. *to*

and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.

8-13. *Foundation of the Temple.*

⁸Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity *unto* Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. ⁹Then stood Jeshua *with* his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, *with* their sons and their brethren the Levites. ¹⁰And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and

the sea of Joppa] R.V. **to the sea, unto Joppa**—the nearest port to Jerusalem; the cedars were tied together in huge rafts and floated along the coast. *the grant...of Cyrus*] who was not however lord of Phoenicia, so this refers merely to the decree which said that the Temple should be rebuilt, and not to any special grant of timber from Lebanon.

8-13. *Foundation of the Temple.*

8. *to set forward*] R.V. **to have the oversight**—a rare Heb. word.

9. It is not clear how many Levit. families are given in this verse, and the final clause comes in awkwardly. Probably there are 3 families: (1) Jeshua's, (2) Kadmiel's—including a special branch, Hodaviah's sons—(3) Henadad's.

10. *they set the priests etc.*] R.V. margin "According to some MSS. and ancient versions **the priests stood.**" This reading on the whole seems preferable to the one in the text, where the subject of 'set' cannot be 'builders'—i.e. the workmen—but must refer back to verse 8, to "Zerubbabel...and Jeshua...and the priests," and it is hardly a likely statement that these appointed (set) the priests. *in their apparel*] i.e. their priestly garments of white linen. *with trumpets*] see Num. x. 8.

the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. ¹¹And they sung together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because *he is good*, for his mercy *endureth* for ever towards Israel. And all the people shouted *with* a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. ¹²But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, *who were* ancient men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: ¹³so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted *with* a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

iv. 1-5. *The Opposition.*

4 Now *when* the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the

with cymbals] David assigned the cymbals to the sons of Asaph, one of the three Levitical guilds. Cf. I. Chron. xxv. 1 with I. Chron. xvi. 4, 5.

11. *And they sung together by course*] R.V. **And they sang one to another.** Some commentators have seen in this an allusion to antiphonal singing—but more probably the phrase means that the chant of praise was answered by a burst of chorus in some familiar refrain, which is quoted in the clause beginning “because he is good” etc. This refrain is not quoted from a Psalm, but was a liturgical response upon which Ps. cxxxvi. was probably founded. This whole verse fulfils the prophecy in Jer. xxxiii. 10, 11.

12. *the first house*] Solomon’s Temple was destroyed 587 B.C. The new temple was begun 536 B.C. Cf. Haggai ii. 3. *wept with a loud voice*] remembering their past sufferings, their diminished numbers, and the dangers, difficulties, and trials that lay before them.

Ch. iv. 1-5. *The Opposition.*

1. *the adversaries*] i.e. the Samaritans. *of Judah and Benjamin*] those who returned were chiefly from these two tribes. *the children of the captivity*] this phrase (‘b’nê hag-golâh’) occurs frequently throughout Ezra.

temple unto the LORD God of Israel; ²then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye *do*; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither. ³But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, You have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us. ⁴Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, ⁵and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

2. *we seek your God, as ye do*] 'to seek' in Ezra and Neh. is equivalent for 'to worship.' *and we do sacrifice unto him*] An alternative reading is "yet we do no sacrifice since" etc., and the difficulty arises from the extreme similarity between the Heb. words for 'unto him' and 'not,' which are frequently interchanged by mistake. On the whole it seems most probable that the received text preserves the right word here. *the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur*] R.V. **Assyria**. Esar-haddon succeeded Sennacherib, and reigned over Assyria 680-668 B.C.

3. The refusal, though probably based on religious motives, was protected by the terms of Cyrus' decree.

4. *the people of the land*] here=the Samaritans—this phrase ('am haâreç') became a synonym for 'the ignorant,' those who knew not the Law (cf. Joh. vii. 49). *weakened the hands*] the Heb. phrase has the idea of a course of weakening, terrifying, and bribing.

5. *hired counsellors*] they bribed the provincial officials to make unfavourable reports about the 'people of Judah' at the king's court. *all the days of Cyrus*] he died in 529 B.C. *until the reign of Darius king of Persia*] Between Cyrus and Darius there reigned two kings, Cambyses (529-522), and Pseudo-Smerdis, who reigned only seven months, and was succeeded in 522 by Darius I. (called Hystaspes)—the politic and wise king who consolidated the great Empire which Cyrus had founded by his military successes.

6-24. *The Opposition continued.*

6 And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they *unto him* an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. **7** And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter *was* written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue.

6-24. *The Opposition continued.*

6. *Ahasuerus*] the well-known Xerxes, son of Darius, who reigned 485-465, and who is probably the 'Ahasuerus' of the book Esther. In profane history we connect his name with the famous battles of Thermopylae and Salamis, of Plataea and Mycale. The Hebrew form of his name is Ahashverosh.

7. *Artaxerxes*] surnamed Longimanus—he was the son and successor of Xerxes—and he reigned from 465 to 425. The name in Hebrew is Artahshashta, and in the inscriptions which have been found in Persia and elsewhere it appears as Artakshathra. *Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel*] names of foreign colonists. Each of these three verses (6, 7, 8) gives a *fresh* instance of Samaritan opposition to the Jews, one in the reign of Xerxes, two in that of Artaxerxes (the first complaint written by Bishlam etc., the second by Rehum etc.). The whole passage (verses 6-23) is probably in reality an anticipatory fragment of later history, inserted here by the Compiler to illustrate the similar course of opposition experienced by the Jews in the days of Cyrus (verses 4 and 5, 24). *written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue*] **R.V. written in the Syrian character, and set forth in the Syrian tongue.** Margin 'Or Aramaic for Syrian.' This probably means that in the days of Artaxerxes the official correspondence of the Syrian province was carried on in Aramaic, which rivalled Greek as the language of diplomacy and commerce among the races of Western Asia. This verse draws attention to the fact that the Aramaic characters (as well as language) were used in the letter¹.

¹ Aramaic was a dialect which gradually took the place of Hebrew as the popular language of the Jews. The Northern Semitic languages have been thus classified:—(1) Assyrian and Babylonian in the E. and N.E. (2) Aramaic on the N. and N.W. (3) Canaanite and Hebrew on the W. Aramaic therefore was closely allied to the Hebrew and Assyrian, and was spoken originally by the N. Semitic tribes. It spread gradually S. and S.E. until it became the principal

⁸Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort: ⁹then wrote Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions; the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites, ¹⁰and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnappar

8. This verse begins the Aramaic section (iv. 8-vi. 18) which opens with the letter of Rehum, but continues (in the narrative) until the close of the account of the Dedication Feast. Probably the Compiler took the whole section, just as it stands, from some Aramaic chronicle, and inserted it bodily in his own history. *Rehum*] the chief official of the Samaritans; the name is probably Persian. *the chancellor*] lit. 'the lord of judgment'—or possibly 'lord of official reports.' *the scribe*] i.e. the governor's secretary.

9. *the Dinaites*] a tribe of W. Armenia. *the Apharsathchites*] these have not yet been identified: possibly they were Persians. *the Tarpelites*] a tribe on the coast of Pontus. *the Apharsites*] probably identical with a Median tribe mentioned in the inscriptions of Sennacherib's time. *the Archevites*] who lived in Warka, a town S.E. of Babylon. *the Babylonians*] dwellers in Babylon, then the capital of the province of Babylonia (while Nineveh was the capital of the whole Empire). *the Susanchites*] inhabitants of Susa, an important town in the Persian Empire. See Neh. i. 1; Dan. viii. 2. It was the capital of the province of Elam. *the Dehavites*] not definitely identified as yet—possibly a Persian tribe. *the Elamites*] the province of Elam was on the E. of Babylonia, W. of Persia, and S. of Media.

10. *the great and noble Asnappar*] R.V. **Osnappar**. This name is found nowhere else in the Bible. He has been identified: (1) with Esar-haddon—though in the inscriptions no such second name or title is given him; (2) with some unknown general of Esar-haddon's armies; (3) with Assur-bani-pal, the great Assyrian king (668-626). This last theory seems the most probable, in the light of recent discoveries, for Assur-bani-pal was the only Assyrian

dialect of the countries between the Tigris and the Mediterranean. Aramaic was at first used amongst the Jews as the language of diplomacy alone—see II. Kings xviii. 26, but by the 4th cent. B.C. many of the Hebrews both wrote and spoke in this dialect, and by the 1st cent. B.C. it had become the ordinary language of the people.

brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria, and the rest *that are on this side the river*, and at such a time. ¹¹This is the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, even unto Artaxerxes the king:

Thy servants the men *on this side the river*, and at such a time. ¹²Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls *thereof*, and joined the foundations. ¹³Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up *again*, *then* will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings. ¹⁴Now because we have

king who took Susa (see v. 9, 'Susanchites'), and he was evidently a 'great and noble' monarch in many ways, for his reign was one long series of brilliant victories. He quelled a rebellion in Babylon, and conquered Elam, which would account for the mention of the colonists from these countries whom Asnappar placed in Samaria.

on this side the river] R.V. **beyond the river**—i.e. West of the Euphrates—the phrase 'the country beyond the river' (the Abhar-Nahara) was the regular geographical name for the Syrian province. *and at such a time*] R.V. **and so forth**—this little phrase is merely an equivalent for our 'et cætera'—and refers to the rest of the lengthy salutation which is here omitted (see also v. 11).

^{11.} *the men on this side the river*] R.V. **beyond the river** (see above).

^{12.} *the Jews*] the first use of the word as applied to the new community at Jerusalem; it had been originally used of the Southern Kingdom II. Kings xvi. 6, xxv. 25, and as the returned exiles were chiefly of that section of the tribes, the name soon became recognised as representing the whole nation. *have set up the walls*] R.V. **finished**—and again in the next verse and v. 16. *and joined the foundations*] R.V. **repaired**.

^{13.} *toll, tribute, and custom*] R.V. **tribute, custom, or toll**. Tribute=the imperial tax on the subject provinces; custom=duties on merchandise or produce; toll=a tax on travellers, for the maintenance of roads. *and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings*] R.V. **and in the end it will endamage the kings**. 'It' refers to the city of Jerusalem.

^{14.} *have maintenance from the king's palace*] R.V. **eat the**

maintenance from *the king's* palace, and *it was* not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king; ¹⁵that search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city *is* a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which *cause* was this city destroyed. ¹⁶We certify the king that, if this city be builded *again*, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on *this* side the river.

¹⁷Then sent the king an answer unto Rehum the chancellor, and to Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their companions that dwell in Samaria, and unto the rest beyond the river:

Peace, and at such a time. ¹⁸The letter which ye sent unto us *hath been* plainly read before me. ¹⁹And I commanded, and search hath been made, and it is found

salt of the palace—in the original an ambiguous phrase, running literally 'we have salted the palace's salt,' i.e. 'are in the king's service'—(not 'have been entertained as guests'). Cf. English 'salary' from Lat. *salarium*=salt money.

15. *the book of the records*] compare vi. 1, 2 and Esther ii. 23, vi. 1, x. 2. *provinces*] the great districts into which the Persian Empire was divided—see Esther i. 1, where they are said to be 127 in number. *destroyed*] R.V. **laid waste.**

16. The letter ends with two warnings as to the possible results of Jerusalem becoming once more a fortified centre: (1) that the Jews would stir up rebellion amongst the Western nations; (2) that a new Jewish Empire might rise upon the stronghold of Jerusalem—as the old Israelite Kingdom had done—and thus the Persian king would lose from his grasp all the country W. of the Euphrates.

17. *unto the rest beyond the river*] R.V. **in the rest of the country beyond the river.** *and at such a time*] R.V. **and so forth.** See note on v. 10.

18. *plainly read before me*] i.e. all the allusions, etc. carefully explained and made clear by the servants whose duty it was to read to the king.

that this city of old time *hath* made insurrection against kings, and *that* rebellion and sedition *have been* made therein. ²⁰ There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all *countries* beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom, *was* paid unto them. ²¹ Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and *that* this city be not builded, until *another* commandment shall be given from me. ²² Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?

²³ Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter *was* read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power. ²⁴ Then ceased the work of the house of the God which is

19. *insurrection against kings*] probably referring to the rebellious doings of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah—II. Kings xxiv. 1, 10, 20.

20. *all countries*] R.V. **the country.** *toll, tribute, and custom*] see note on v. 13.

21. *Give ye now commandment*] R.V. **Make ye now a decree.** *that this city be not builded*] The king's evident alarm at the rebuilding of a strong city supports the theory that this was Artaxerxes Longimanus (of the time of Nehemiah), for in his predecessor's reign the Greeks had won many of their great naval victories, and the whole western frontier of the Persian Empire had been weakened by the repeated defeats sustained by Xerxes at Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale. (See the period 490-470 B.C. in Greek history.) It seems to bring additional life and interest to the narrative if we connect with this time the names of such heroes as Miltiades, King Leonidas, and Themistocles.

23. *made them to cease by force and power*] lit. 'with an arm and with troops.' The Samaritans enforced the royal decree with ready zeal, feeling that they had now legal authority to support their violence. Possibly Neh. i. 3 refers to the results of the strong measures employed by the opposing party. The anticipatory fragment (vv. 6-23) ends here, and the next verse resumes the thread of the narrative abruptly broken off at v. 5.

at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

v. 1-5. *The work resumed. Opponents remonstrate.*

5 Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the

24. *unto the second year of the reign of Darius*] i.e. 521 B.C. The cessation of the work during this period (from Cyrus to Darius) is easily explained by the facts of contemporary history. Cyrus was wholly occupied in vast schemes of conquest, and cared little for the affairs of his distant Syrian province. Cambyses, his successor, was a suspicious man, ready to listen to the evil reports of his officials concerning the province, and during the brief reign of the usurper Pseudo-Smerdis there was too much disturbance at head-quarters to allow time for inquiry into the wrongs of far-off Abhar-Nahara—the country ‘beyond the River.’

Note on vv. 7-23. There are differences of opinion as to the chronology of this section, and there are many who would not support our ‘anticipatory fragment’ theory. The difficulty lies in the identification of the Persian kings mentioned in this chapter. Their names and order according to profane history are as follows: (1) Cyrus, died 529. (2) Cambyses, 529-522. (3) Gomates or Pseudo-Smerdis, 522. (4) Darius I. (Hystaspes) 522-485. (5) Xerxes, 485-465. (6) Artaxerxes I. (Longimanus) 465-425. (7) Xerxes II. (8) Sogdianus. (9) Darius II. (Nothus) 424-395, etc. In Ezra iv. 5 and 24 we learn that the building of the Temple was caused to cease from the reign of Cyrus till the second year of Darius (536-520). In iv. 6 a letter hostile to the Jews is referred to as written ‘in the reign of Ahasuerus,’ and this name is generally admitted to be the same as the Heb. form of Xerxes (cf. Bk. of Esther). If this chapter contains a chronological narrative, how is it that Xerxes and Artaxerxes come before their predecessor Darius I.? Some would explain this by identifying Ahasuerus with Cambyses, and Artaxerxes with Pseudo-Smerdis. But there are no satisfactory grounds for this identification, and the mention of ‘city walls’ rather than of the Temple (in the letter to Artaxerxes) points to a later date than the time of Pseudo-Smerdis. We come back therefore to the theory stated above (v. 7) that 6-23 is a passage of later history inserted by the Compiler in his narrative in this place because of its similarity of subject.

Ch. v. 1-5. *The work resumed. Opponents remonstrate.*

1. *Haggai the prophet*] the repetition of the word ‘prophet’ is explained by comparison with Haggai i. 1 and Ezra vi. 14, which

Jews that *were* in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, *even* unto them. ²Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them *were* the prophets of God helping them.

³At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on *this* side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?

show that he was generally known by this title. His book contains three separate prophecies, all delivered in the 2nd year of Darius—(1) on the 1st day of the 6th month, (2) on the 21st day of the 7th month, (3) on the 24th day of the 9th month. *Zechariah the son of Iddo*] or rather, 'grandson.' See Zech. i. 1. In Neh. xii. 4

an 'Iddo' occurs among the heads of priestly houses. He was probably more famous than his son Berechiah, the father of Zechariah, according to the prophet's own book. Zech. i. 1 gives the 8th month of the 2nd year of Darius (521 B.C.) as the date of his first prophecy. *in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them*]

R.V. in the name of the God of Israel prophesied they unto them. R.V. marg. 'in the name of the God of Israel which was upon them.' The latter rendering seems the more probable, referring to the spiritual calling of the nation, which had been so specially chosen out by God. Cf. Is. xliii. 5-7, lxiii. 19; Dan. ix. 18.

3. Tatnai, governor on this side the river] R.V. **Tattenai, the governor beyond the river.** He appears as 'Sisinnēs' in I. Esdras vi. 7. He was probably 'satrap' of all Syria and Cilicia W. of the Euphrates. The Persian kingdom was divided into 20 satrapies, or provinces, each with a governor over it, who was answerable to the king alone, and had great power in his own domain. 'Governor beyond the river' was the technical title for the satrap of the Syrian province, and is found on Persian coins. Zerubbabel was the 'pekhah' or small local governor of the district of Jerusalem, and acknowledged the satrap as his superior. *Shethar-boznai*] perhaps a secretary to Tattenai (as Shimshai to Rehum, iv. 8). In I. Esdras vi. 3 he appears as 'Sathrabuzanes.'

Who hath commanded you] R.V. **Who gave you a decree? to make up this wall]** R.V. **to finish this wall.** It was about 18 years since the decree of Cyrus, so its existence may well have been forgotten by those in authority, and Tatnai was probably a satrap recently appointed.

⁴ Then said we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building? ⁵ But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter.

6-17. *Opponents appeal to Darius.*

⁶ The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on *this* side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which *were* on *this* side the river, sent unto Darius the king: ⁷ they sent a letter unto him, wherein *was* written thus:

⁸ Unto Darius the king, all peace. Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God, which is builded *with* great stones, and timber *is* laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands. ⁹ Then asked we those elders, *and* said unto them thus, Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up

⁴. *Then said we unto them*] This reading is probably a copyist's error for 'Then said *they*,' i.e. Tattenai and his friends, who make the further inquiry concerning the Jewish leaders. See also v. 10.

⁵. *But the eye of their God was upon the elders*] Cf. Deut. xi. 12; Ps. xxxiii. 18.

6-17. *Opponents appeal to Darius.*

⁶. *Tatnai, governor etc.*] See note on v. 3. *the Apharsachites, which were on this side the river*] R.V. ...**which were beyond the river.** Possibly the same as the Apharsathchites of iv. 9, but nothing is known of this tribe.

⁸. *the province of Judea*] R.V. **the province of Judah.** See note on ii. 1. 'Judea' is a later title, occurring first in the Apocrypha (Tob. i. 18, etc.). *the house of the great God*] Note the reverence of the heathen governor towards the God of the subject race. *great stones*] lit. 'stones of rolling,' i.e. so large that they were moved to their places on rollers. See the pictures of large blocks of stone and marble in ancient temples of the East. *timber is laid in the walls*] i.e. beams to support floors and roofs. *goeth fast on*] R.V. **goeth on with diligence.**

these walls? ¹⁰ We asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that *were* the chief of them. ¹¹ And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up. ¹² But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon. ¹³ But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon *the same* king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. ¹⁴ And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that *was* in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they *were* delivered unto *one*, whose name *was* Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; ¹⁵ and said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that *is* in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place. ¹⁶ Then came the same Sheshbazzar, *and* laid the foundation of the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now *hath it been* in building, and *yet it is* not

10. *the chief of them*] R.V. **at the head of them.**

11. *the servants of the God of heaven and earth*] a very emphatic sentence in the original. *a great king*] i.e. Solomon, whose temple was building 1014-1007, nearly 500 years before Darius. *and set up*] R.V. **finished.**

12. *after that*] R.V. marg. 'because that,' a preferable rendering. *provoked...unto wrath*] See II. Chron. xxxvi. 14-21. *the Chaldean*] i.e. Babylonian.

14. *whom he had made governor*] lit. 'pekhah,' an Assyrian title, equivalent to the Persian 'Tirshatha.' In Haggai i. 1 Zerubbabel is called 'pekhah.' See note on i. 8.

16. *since that time*] the building had apparently gone on during the interval, 536-520, but on a small and unimportant scale.

finished. ¹⁷Now therefore, if *it seem* good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which *is* there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree *was* made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this *matter*.

vi. 1-12. *The Decree of Darius.*

6 Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. ²And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that *is* in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein *was* a record thus written:

³In the first year of Cyrus the king *the same* Cyrus the king made a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and *let* the foundations thereof

17. *the king's treasure house*] where documents as well as treasure were laid up. See Esther iii. 9, iv. 7, where the same word is used.

Ch. vi. 1-12. *The Decree of Darius.*

1. *in the house of the rolls*] R.V. **in the house of the archives** (marg. Aramaic 'books'). This must have been a state library containing rolls of parchment and papyrus, and also records inscribed with a sharp point on clay tablets, such as are found in great numbers at this day during the explorations near Nineveh and Babylon.

2. *Achmetha*] the Aramaic form of Ecbatana, the capital of Media, and summer residence of the Persian kings. Possibly the records had been transferred thither from Babylon during the disturbed reign of the usurper Pseudo-Smerdis. *the palace*] i.e. the royal residence, which was probably also the citadel and the treasury. *the province of the Medes*] Media lay between the Caspian Sea and Elam, having Parthia on the east and Mt Zagros on the west. Cyrus (550 B.C.) overcame Astyages, King of Media, and united the province with the Persian kingdom.

3. See R.V. for the punctuation—the phrase 'concerning...Jerusalem' forms a heading in the original. *let the foundations thereof be strongly laid*] the meaning of the Aramaic here is uncer-

be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; 4 with three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house: 5 and also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God. 6 Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-boznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence: 7 let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place. 8 Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the

tain. The dimensions which follow, if correct, prove this temple to have been much larger than Solomon's, yet see Zech. iv. 10; Hagg. ii. 3.

4. This *v.* has been variously explained, but probably I. Kings vi. 36, referring to the construction of the inner court walls, is the best solution. *out of the king's house]* i.e. from the royal revenue, to be furnished probably by the satrap out of the provincial treasury.

5. *and place them]* R.V. **and thou shalt put them...** Abrupt change to 2nd pers. sing. Sheshbazzar is evidently here addressed.

6. The Decree of Darius, containing (a) the prohibition of interference, (b) the command to supply money and material, (c) the king's desire for prayer on behalf of himself and his sons, (d) the penalty of non-compliance. The decree of Darius follows that of Cyrus without any word of explanation from the Compiler. *be ye far from thence]* i.e. keep away from Jerusalem, and do not interfere with the work.

8. *of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river]* i.e. of that part of the revenues of the province west of the Euphrates which was paid into the royal treasury, as distinguished from the rest, which was used by the satrap for administration and his own

king's goods, *even* of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that *they* be not hindered. ⁹And that which *they* have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which *are* at Jerusalem, let *it* be given them day by day without fail: ¹⁰that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons. ¹¹Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dung-hill for this. ¹²And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter *and* to destroy this house of

support. *forthwith*] R.V. **with all diligence**—a Persian word implying care and attention. *that they be not hindered*] a better rendering is 'which is not to be neglected,' an abrupt sentence showing the urgency of the decree.

9. *for the burnt offerings*] cf. vii. 17, one chief class of offering, while the meal offering (flour, oil, salt, etc.) follows, as the other chief class. Cf. Num. xv. 1-16; Ex. xxix. 40; Lev. ii. 1-16.

10. *sacrifices of sweet savours*] R.V. ...**savour**. Cf. the expression in Ex. xxix. 18; Lev. i. 9, etc., with Gen. viii. 21, which refers to the acceptableness of the offering. It may have reference also to the incense used. *pray for the life etc.*] Cf. Jer. xxix. 7. Prayer for Gentile kings is referred to again in Baruch i. 11, which should be compared with this passage.

11. *whosoever shall alter*] See Dan. vi. 15, "It is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed" (R.V.), from which comes our proverbial phrase 'a law of the Medes and Persians.' The terrible punishment of impalement (alluded to in Assyrian and Persian inscriptions) is here named as the penalty; or the reference may possibly be to a form of crucifixion. Cf. Num. xxv. 4, 5.

12. *the God that hath caused his name etc.*] a Hebrew phrase (often used in the O.T.) inserted by the Compiler in his rough outline of the Decree of Darius. *to alter and to destroy*] i.e. to

God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed.

13-18. *Completion and Consecration of the Temple.*

¹³ Then Tatnai, governor on *this* side the river, Shethar-boznai, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily. ¹⁴ And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished *it*, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. ¹⁵ And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which *was in* the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. ¹⁶ And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of

alter the decree and destroy the temple. *speed*] R.V. **diligence.**
See *vv.* 8 and 13.

13-18. *Completion and Consecration of the Temple.*

14. *through the prophesying*] the workers were encouraged by the promises and stirred up by the zeal of Haggai and Zechariah, e.g. 'The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former,' Hagg. ii. 9 (R.V.). 'Thus saith the Lord: I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts,' etc. Zech. ii. 16 (R.V.) etc. See note on v. 1. R.V. **the decree of Cyrus.** A word differing slightly from that used for the 'commandment' of God. *Artaxerxes*] Why does his name occur in this connexion? His decree quoted in iv. 18-22 was one of opposition to the Jews, so cannot be the one here referred to. The Compiler must have once more (see note to iv. 7) anticipated later history, and inserted the name here, although it does not belong to the period of the events he is recording.

15. *Adar*] the 12th month of the Jewish calendar, which corresponded to our March. The name is probably from an Assyrian god 'Adar.' The work had been going on for $4\frac{1}{2}$ years (see Hagg. i. 15), though the foundations were laid 20 years before. The year is 516 B.C.

16. *the children of Israel*] the title is used here to mark the im-

the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy, ¹⁷and offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁸And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses.

19-22. *Celebration of the Passover.*

¹⁹And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth *day* of the first month. ²⁰For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them *were* pure, and killed the passover for all the

portance of the festival. *with joy*] some commentators hold that Pss. cxlvi.-cxlviii. were composed for this occasion, possibly by Haggai and Zechariah; but there is no definite proof of this.

^{17.} *at the dedication of this house*] a comparison is here implied between these sacrifices and those far more costly ones made by Solomon on a similar occasion. See I. Kings viii. 5, 63, and cf. Zech. iv. 10. *a sin offering...twelve he goats*] Cf. Num. vii. 87. The number here symbolizes the twelve tribes, signifying that although these were now lost and scattered, the scanty remnant who had returned still clung to the ideal of the nation's unity, and hoped yet for full restoration to their former glory.

^{18.} *the priests in their divisions*] the organization of the priests and Levites, described in I. Chron. xxiii.-xxvi. *as it is written in the book of Moses*] probably a general reference to the Levitical arrangements, as described in Chronicles. See also Num. iii. and viii. The Aramaic section (iv. 8-vi. 18) ends here. See note on iv. 8.

19-22. *Celebration of the Passover.*

^{19.} *the first month*] Nisan. See Ex. xii. 6. The recorded celebrations of the Passover were always held on some specially solemn occasion, when the people were re-consecrated to the service of God. See Num. ix. 5; Josh. v. 10; II. Chron. xxx. 1, 2; II. Kings xxiii. 21—which are the only other Passovers recorded in the O.T.

^{20.} From this verse we gather that 'the Levites' killed the passover for the rest, and by comparing with II. Chron. xxix. 34 it seems that they were more strict in observance of the ceremonial

children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. ²¹And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat, ²²and kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

PART II. CHAPS. VII.-X. THE RETURN UNDER EZRA.

vii. 1-5. *Ezra's Genealogy.*

7 Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of

law than the more numerous 'priests.' The O.T. gives us three stages of custom as regards the slaughter of the Paschal lamb. (a) Originally it was performed by the head of each household (Ex. xii. 3 etc.). (b) In the days of Hezekiah, the Levites killed for all who were ceremonially unclean (II. Chron. xxx. 17). (c) In the days of Josiah, the Levites killed for all alike (II. Chron. xxxv. 10-14). The reasons for the change were (1) to secure ceremonial purity, (2) to relieve the priests.

21. Two classes who shared the feast, (1) the returned exiles, (2) those who had 'separated themselves.' These latter were probably Israelites who had remained in Palestine and mingled with the heathen races around; 'the filthiness' is the idolatry with which they had been to some extent polluted. Some think however that the phrase refers to proselytes from the heathen themselves; but see ix. 1 and x. 11.

22. *seven days*] Ex. xii. 15. *the king of Assyria*] i.e. Darius (King of Persia), so called possibly because the Persian kings succeeded to the Assyrian Empire, or because all West Asia *might* be called 'Assyria.' The phrase may however be a copyist's error.

PART II. CHAPS. VII.-X. THE RETURN UNDER EZRA.

Ch. vii. 1-5. *Ezra's Genealogy.*

1. *Now after these things*] a gap of 58 years (516-458) between this and the last chapter is here bridged over, and the whole reign of Xerxes is omitted, except for the allusion in iv. 6. The story of Esther falls within this interval. *in the reign of Artaxerxes*]

Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, ² the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, ³ the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, ⁴ the son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, ⁵ the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest:

6-10. *Arrival at Jerusalem.*

⁶this Ezra went up from Babylon; and he *was* a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God

son of Xerxes, reigned 465-425. Ezra's genealogy is traced back to Aaron, but is given in an abbreviated form, as only 15 names occur, representing a period of 1000 years. Jewish genealogies were often shortened and re-arranged in artificial groups (cf. the three-fold grouping in S. Matt. i. 1-16). Some names may also have accidentally dropped out through carelessness of copyists. *son of Seraiah*] i.e. probably descended from a son of Seraiah, who had been the High Priest slain 130 years before by Nebuchadnezzar (II. Kings xxv. 18-21). Many of the gaps in this genealogy can be filled up from I. Chron. and I. and II. Esdras (Apocr.). *Hilkiah*] the High Priest of Josiah's reign (II. Kings xxii. 4).

5. *Phinehas*] Ps. cvi. 30 records his act of zeal when he stayed the plague which was punishing the people for idolatry. *Aaron the chief priest*] lit. 'head-priest.' Before the Captivity the High Priest was usually called merely 'the priest,' and the later title is not found often in the Pentateuch.

6-10. *Arrival at Jerusalem.*

6. *went up*] i.e. to Jerusalem. *a ready scribe*] one who was quick and apt in explaining the law. The word 'scribe' (Heb. 'sophêr') was originally the title of the king's secretary or chancellor (cf. II. Sam. viii. 17; I. Kings iv. 3, etc.). In the closing days of the Monarchy it was applied to the copyists of the Law (Jer. viii. 8), and after the Captivity the name denoted the important class who not only copied but also explained the written law to the people. They became in time most prominent members of the community, superseding the prophet and in influence surpassing the priest. Ezra is generally regarded as the founder of the later type of scribes. *all his request*] we are not told what this was, but may gather the substance from vv. 12-26. *according to the hand of the LORD*

upon him. ⁷And there went up *some* of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. ⁸And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which *was in* the seventh year of the king. ⁹For upon the first *day* of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. ¹⁰For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

his God upon him] a characteristic phrase of the writer (vii. 9, 28, viii. 18, 22, 31; Neh. ii. 8, 18). It expresses the Divine favour shown towards a man.

7. The nation divided into Laity ('some of the children of Israel'), Priests, Levites, Singers, Porters, Nethinim, as in ch. ii. *the Nethinims*] See note on ii. 43. *the seventh year of Artaxerxes*] i.e. 458 B.C.

8. *he came*] i.e. Ezra, the leader of the caravan. *the fifth month*] the Jewish Ab, answering roughly to our August.

9. *began he to go up*] lit. 'that was the foundation of the going up' (Heb.), a clumsy and awkward construction in the original; a clearer reading than the above is 'he had *appointed* to go up,' viz. on the 1st day of the 1st month, which was Nisan (March-April). The journey lasted about 108 days, and was in length about 900 miles, owing to the *détour* by Carchemish which Ezra made to avoid the desert. It was in the hot summer months, so the caravan would travel only at night and in the early morning, and as it consisted of whole families carrying with them all their private possessions, it would move but slowly. *the fifth month*] Ab (August).

10. *For Ezra* etc.] this verse probably refers back to the whole account of Ezra's expedition, and sets forth his motives in starting on this great journey. *had prepared* (R.V. *set*) *his heart*] the verb has the idea of 'stability of purpose.' Cf. Ps. lvii. 7, cviii. 1, etc. *to seek the law*] i.e. to search out the spirit underlying the letter of God's commandments. This verse gives us a picture of "the ideal scribe," in his relation to the law, his own life, and his teaching of other men. Cf. Acts i. 1, 'to do and to teach.' *statutes and judgments*] i.e. set rules of conduct, and those which custom, justice, or authority determine.

11-26. *Artaxerxes' Commission to Ezra.*

¹¹Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, *even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel:*

¹²Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect *peace*, and at such a time. ¹³I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, *which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.* ¹⁴Forasmuch as *thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors, to*

11-26. *Artaxerxes' Commission to Ezra.*

The contents of the letter are in Aramaic (see note iv. 7), not in Hebrew.

11. *Ezra the priest*] his priestly lineage has been given (*vv. 1-5*). *even a scribe*] R.V. **even the scribe.**

12. *king of kings*] a title often found (on inscriptions) applied to Persian monarchs, who ruled over many subject kingdoms. *the God of heaven*] the same title occurs in the letters of Darius (vi. 9, 10) and of Tattenai (v. 11, 12), though in the latter example it occurs in quotation merely. *perfect peace, and at such a time*] R.V. **perfect and so forth.** Probably the elaborate salutation is here condensed, and 'perfect' refers to Ezra, being most likely one of a whole list of complimentary adjectives, after the Eastern manner of greeting. The Commission may be thus analyzed: (a) the salutation, (b) permission to return to Jerusalem, (c) the objects of the Commission—(1) to enquire into the condition of the community at Jerusalem, (2) to carry thither gifts from king and council, and from Babylonish subjects, and freewill offerings of Jewish priests and people—(d) the purpose of all these gifts (sacrifices and general needs), (e) permission to draw upon the local (royal) treasury for extra expenses, (f) credit up to a certain fixed sum granted to Ezra on all the local treasuries west of Euphrates, (g) the king's reason for all these favours, viz. propitiation of 'the God of heaven,' (h) immunity from taxation granted to priests, Levites, etc., (i) Ezra empowered to appoint judges for his community, to teach them the Law, and to inflict the heaviest penalties for disobedience.

13. *his priests*] R.V. **their priests.**

14. *his seven counsellors*] cf. Esther i. 14. *to inquire*] i.e.

inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which *is* in thine hand; ¹⁵and to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation *is* in Jerusalem, ¹⁶and all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which *is* in Jerusalem: ¹⁷that thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which *is* in Jerusalem. ¹⁸And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and gold, *that* do after the will of your God. ¹⁹The vessels also that *are* given thee for the service of the house of thy God, *those* deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem. ²⁰And whatsoever more *shall be* needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow *it* out of the king's treasure house. ²¹And I, *even* I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the

concerning the moral and religious condition of the Jewish community.

15. *habitation*] i.e. the Temple.

16. *in all...Babylon*] i.e. amongst those in whose midst the Jews had lived for 130 years. *the freewill offering*] from their own countrymen.

17. The sacrifices in this verse (as in vi. 9, 10) are burnt offerings (bullocks, rams, lambs) with their meal and drink offerings (Num. xv. 1-16). *meat offerings*] R.V. **meal offerings**.

19. *The vessels*] probably those presented by the king and private persons enumerated in viii. 25-27, and quite distinct from the sacred vessels restored by Cyrus (i. 7). *the God of Jerusalem*] probably a shortened form for 'the God of Israel whose habitation is in Jerusalem.'

20. Leave granted to Ezra to draw upon the local treasury for extra sums.

21. Credit (up to a certain fixed amount) granted to Ezra on all local treasuries west of the Euphrates.

treasurers which *are* beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, *it* be done speedily, ²²unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing *how much*. ²³Whatsoever *is* commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? ²⁴Also *we* certify you, that *touching* any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it *shall not be* lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them. ²⁵And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that *is* in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that *are* beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know *them* not. ²⁶And whosoever will not do the law of thy God,

22. *an hundred talents of silver*] about £37,500. *measures*] a 'measure' = 8 bushels or 1 quarter. *baths*] a 'bath' = 6 or 7 gallons. *salt*] See Lev. ii. 13. Salt was used with every meat offering—(1) for purification, (2) for preservation.

23. *why should there be wrath etc.*] the king wished to win the favour of the mighty God of the Jews, especially at this time when he was harassed by foes on many sides, and was occupied in putting down the revolt of Egypt.

24. *Nethinims*] R.V. **Nethinim**. See ii. 43. *ministers*] R.V. **servants**. Josephus records a similar immunity from taxation granted to the priests and Levites by Antiochus the Great.

25. This commission gave Ezra special powers over all Jews in Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine. *and teach ye them etc.*] R.V. **teach ye him**, i.e. every Jew who had become forgetful or careless of his religious duties while living amongst the heathen.

26. Full powers over life, limb, and property were entrusted to Ezra, yet his commission did not make him superior to the Persian officials of the satrapy, but was intended merely to help him in his work of re-organising the Jewish community and establishing the Law. The Aramaic section ends here.

and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether *it be* unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

27, 28. *Ezra's Thanksgiving.*

27 Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem: 28 and hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as the hand of the LORD my God *was* upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief *men* to go up with me.

viii. 1-20. *List of Ezra's Company.*

8 These *are* now the chief of their fathers, and *this is* the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king. 2 Of the sons of Phinehas; Gershom: of the sons of Ithamar;

27, 28. *Ezra's Thanksgiving.*

27. This verse marks a fresh abrupt transition of subject, and the Hebrew is here resumed.

28. *mercy unto me*] the 1st person is here used for the first time and continues to the end of ix. *the hand of the LORD my God was upon me*] cf. v. 6 and note. *of Israel*] i.e. of the laity.

Ch. viii. 1-20. *List of Ezra's Company.*

(a) Heads of Fathers' Houses, 1-14. (b) Levites and Nethinim, 17-20.

1. *the chief of their fathers*] R.V. **the heads of their fathers' houses**; here follows a list with the names of the clans (or 'houses') and of their chiefs. For the right punctuation of *vv.* 2-14 see R.V.

2. First come the Priestly and Royal houses. Ezra belonged to the house of Phinehas (cf. vii. 1-5). *Ithamar*] Aaron's younger son, himself the founder of a 'house.' This reference proves that the priesthood was not limited to the line of Zadok (Ezek. xliii. 19, xlv. 15). 'Of the sons of David, Hattush the son of Shechaniah,' is the clearest rendering of the next clause.

Daniel: of the sons of David; Hattush. ³Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Pharosh; Zechariah: and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males an hundred and fifty. ⁴Of the sons of Pahath-moab; Elihoenai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males. ⁵Of the sons of Shechaniah; the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males. ⁶Of the sons also of Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males. ⁷And of the sons of Elam; Jeshaiiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males. ⁸And of the sons of Shephatiah; Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him fourscore males. ⁹Of the sons of Joab; Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males. ¹⁰And of the sons of Shelomith; the son of Josiphiah, and with him an hundred and threescore males. ¹¹And of the sons of Bebai; Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight males. ¹²And of the sons of Azgad; Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him an hundred and ten males. ¹³And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names *are* these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them threescore males. ¹⁴Of the sons also of Bigvai; Uthai, and Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

¹⁵And I gathered them together to the river that

3-14. The houses of the Laity, identical (with two slight differences) with the lists in ch. ii. and Neh. vii. Twelve households are given, possibly to symbolize the unity of the restored nation. The parallel list of I. Esdras corresponds, with but few variations in names and numbers. The list in Ezra ii. gives the *total numbers*; here we have the number of *males only*.

13. *of the last sons of Adonikam*] R.V. **of the sons of Adonikam, that were the last.** Probably the elder branches of this family had returned with Zerubbabel (ii. 13) and now the younger branches, 'the last,' joined Ezra, and were represented by *three* names instead of by one, as in the other cases of the 'heads of houses.'

15-20. *The Camp at Ahava.*

15. *the river that runneth to Ahava*] This river has been

runneth to Ahava; and there abode we in tents three days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi. ¹⁶Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for Meshullam, chief *men*; also for Joiarib, and for Elnathan, *men* of understanding. ¹⁷And I sent them with commandment unto Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say unto Iddo, *and to his brethren the Nethinims*, at the place Casiphia, that *they* should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God. ¹⁸And by the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his

variously identified, (*a*) with the Palacopas, which flowed S. of Babylon; (*b*) with the Is, which flowed from the E. into the Euphrates at a point where stood a town of the same name, eight days' journey from Babylon; (*c*) with a canal near Babylon: this last theory seems the most probable, as the caravan had evidently not started upon the march, but must have been reviewed at no great distance from Babylon. Probably the Jews were wont to meet for worship by the banks of rivers (cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 1), as we know their custom was in later times (cf. Acts xvi. 13). *none of the sons of Levi*] Only 74 Levites returned with Zerubbabel, though there were over 4000 priests. Probably the Levites had assisted in the worship at 'high places,' and had taken part in other idolatrous rites for many years past, and so were unwilling to return to the Temple service.

16. *men of understanding*] R.V. **which were teachers.**

17. *Iddo the chief*] probably the Levite at the head of a college of young Levites and Nethinim at Casiphia, which was most likely a village near Babylon. The rest of this verse is doubtful in meaning, as the Heb. text is here corrupt; the most probable reading is 'unto Iddo and his brethren (i.e. Levites) and the Nethinim.' He evidently presided over both Levites and Nethinim.

18. *by the good hand*] See note vii. 6. *a man of understanding*] R.V. **a man of discretion**; his name appears to have dropped out of the text.

brethren, eighteen; ¹⁹and Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren and their sons, twenty; ²⁰also of the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinims: all of them were expressed by name.

21-23. *The Solemn Fast.*

²¹Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that *we* might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. ²²For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of *soldiers* and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God *is* upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath *is* against all them that forsake him. ²³So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.

24-30. *The Custody of the Gifts.*

²⁴Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests,

^{20.} *all...expressed by name*] the idea is that of names 'pricked off' on a list, which the compiler did not think it necessary to insert here.

21-23. *The Solemn Fast.*

This was appointed by Ezra, (a) as a sign of submission and repentance; (b) to strengthen the religious fervour of the people; (c) as a proof of faith and dependence on God alone.

^{21.} *afflict ourselves*] R.V. **humble ourselves**, N.B. *not* the pagan idea of propitiation by self-inflicted physical suffering, as the A.V. implies.

^{22.} *a band of soldiers*] Cf. Neh. ii. 9. The danger lay in the possibility of sudden attacks by robbers and Bedouins in the desert. *The hand of our God*] See vii. 6 and cf. R.V. *forsake*] i.e. by want of faith in the Divine protection.

24-30. *The Custody of the Gifts.*

^{24.} The meaning of this *v.* is not clear. See R.V. and R.V. marg.

Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them, ²⁵and weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, *even* the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel *there* present, had offered: ²⁶I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, *and of* gold an hundred talents; ²⁷also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold. ²⁸And I said unto them, *Ye are* holy unto the LORD; the vessels *are* holy also; and the silver and the gold *are* a freewill offering unto the LORD God of our fathers. ²⁹Watch ye, and keep *them*, until ye weigh *them* before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, *in* the chambers of the house of the LORD. ³⁰So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring *them* to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

The latter is probably right,—‘I separated 12...of the priests *besides* Sherebiah’ etc., i.e. in all, 12 Levites and 12 priests were selected as guardians of the gifts; see also *v.* 30.

25. *the silver* etc.] see vii. 15-19, 27.

26. The huge sums here mentioned have given rise to doubts as to the accuracy of the figures, the total value amounting to nearly £1,000,000 of our money!

A talent of silver = £375. A talent of gold = £6,750. A dram (R.V. **daric**) = £1. These reckonings are as nearly correct as possible, but it is difficult to give the exact value of the Jewish measures in our money.

27. *fine copper*] R.V. **fine bright brass**.

28. *Ye are holy unto the LORD*] i.e. consecrated to the Lord, set apart for His service.

29. *chief of the fathers*] R.V. **princes of the fathers' houses**. *the chambers of the house of the LORD*] See I. Kings vi. 5 and I. Chron. xxviii. 12 for a description; they were store-rooms and meeting-places for the priests.

31-36. *The Journey and Arrival.*

³¹Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. ³²And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days. ³³Now on the fourth day was the silver and the gold and the vessels weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them was Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites; ³⁴by number and by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time. ³⁵Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel,

31-36. *The Journey and Arrival.*

31. *Ahava*] see v. 15. *the twelfth day of the first month*] Cf. vii. 8 and viii. 15. The halt at Ahava lasted three days, and if Ahava was near Babylon (see note, v. 15), the actual march cannot have begun till the 12th day (of 'Nisan'), the arrival at Ahava being assigned to the 9th day: while if Ahava is identified with Is, the journey from Babylon thither would have taken about nine days, in which case the actual march began on the 1st.

32. *we came to Jerusalem*] on the 1st day of the 5th month (Ab). See note on vii. 9. *three days*] this was an interval for rest after the long journey, and to prepare plans; cf. Neh. ii. 11, where the same interval elapses after Nehemiah's arrival.

33. *weighed...by the hand of*] R.V. **weighed...into the hand of.** Meremoth and his three companions probably received the treasure *after* it had been weighed, and were responsible henceforth for its safety. For the names in this v. cf. Neh. iii. 4, 21, x. 9, xii. 3, 8, 42.

35. *the children of those that had been carried away*] R.V. **the children of the captivity**, the oft-repeated title ('hag-gôlah'). See ii. 1, vi. 19 etc. The offerings of Ezra's company as here detailed are nearly the same as those offered by Zerubbabel's company at the dedication of the Temple (vi. 17): bullocks, rams, and lambs are in both cases sacrificed, and in the name of the

twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats *for* a sin offering: all *this was* a burnt offering unto the LORD. 36 And they delivered the king's commissions unto the king's lieutenants, and *to* the governors on *this* side the river: and they furthered the people, and the house of God.

ix. 1-5. *Israel's Sin.*

9 Now when these *things* were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, *doing* according to their

whole people. *twelve bullocks*] to symbolize the ideal unity of the nation, though now scattered and diminished. *ninety and six rams*] eight for each tribe. *seventy and seven lambs*] the consecrated number magnified, to mark the solemnity of the occasion. *all this was a burnt offering*] i.e. was completely consumed by the sacrificial fire. The offering was one of thanksgiving (for protection during the long journey) and of consecration (of the new life of the restored community).

36. *commissions*] the word is only found elsewhere in the O.T. in the Aramaic sections, and is variously translated as 'law' and 'decree.' *the king's lieutenants*] R.V. **the king's satraps**, a Persian word which occurs often in Esther and Daniel; the 'satrap' was the governor of a province under the Persian Empire, and was responsible to the king for all his acts. His power was kept in check by the royal official scribe who kept the king informed of all that went on in the satrapy. *the governors*] i.e. the 'pekhahs' (such as Tatnai, v. 3, 4, and Zerubbabel, vi. 7), who were subordinate to the satraps. Every satrapy was divided into smaller districts, with a 'pekhah' to administer justice in each. 'Tirshatha' seems to have been the Persian title for the 'pekhah' (ii. 63). *on this side the river*] R.V. **beyond the river**, i.e. Euphrates, see iv. 10.

Ch. ix. 1-5. *Israel's Sin.*

1. *Now when these things were done*] i.e. probably about four months after the events in viii. 31-35. *the princes*] the heads of the families or clans. *have not separated themselves*] i.e. by intermarriage with heathen tribes they had fallen

abominations, *even* of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. ²For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of *those* lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. ³And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and pluckt off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished. ⁴Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished

into idolatry, cf. vi. 21. *their abominations*] a familiar phrase in the O.T. for describing the impure forms of nature worship among the heathen. In this list of eight heathen peoples, three names (Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians) are added to the usual list of nations conquered by Israel, e.g. in Deut., Ex. and Josh., and represent the 'peoples' on the frontier with whom Israel came in contact. Cf. also Deut. xxiii. 3-7.

2. *the holy seed*] i.e. the Chosen People, set apart and consecrated to God. See Ex. xix. 5 and Isai. vi. 13. *have mingled themselves*] cf. Ps. cvi. 34, 35. *rulers*] marg. 'deputies'—the word in the original ('*segānīm*') is Assyrian in origin, and occurs frequently in Neh., also in Jer. and Ezek. These officials probably held inferior posts under the 'princes' or governors, who were the chief authorities.

3. *I rent my garment and my mantle*] as a sign of grief and horror—such symbolic rending of garments is often recorded in the Bible—e.g. in the case of Reuben, Gen. xxxvii. 29; Jacob, Gen. xxxvii. 34; his sons, Gen. xlv. 13 etc. etc., also in the N.T. S. Matt. xxvi. 65. The 'mantle' was the long flowing robe, and the 'garment' the tunic worn beneath it. *and pluckt off the hair*] this sign of mourning occurs only here in the O.T., though the shaven head as a token of grief is often referred to, e.g. Job i. 20; Ezek. vii. 18. *astonied*] the word implies a sense of overwhelming bewilderment, cf. Dan. iv. 19.

4. *those that had been carried away*] R.V. **them of the captivity**—Heb. 'hag-gōlah' the collective title as before—see ii. 1,

until the evening sacrifice. ⁵And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God, ⁶and said,

6-15. *Ezra's Prayer.*

O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over *our* head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. ⁷Since the days of our fathers *have we been* in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, *and* our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as *it is*

vi. 19, 20, etc. *the evening sacrifice*] the daily meal-offering ('minkhah') offered every night.

5. *my heaviness*] R.V. **my humiliation**—marg. 'fasting'—the word only occurs here in O.T. It became later the technical term for ceremonial fasting. *having rent my garment and my mantle*] R.V. **even with my garment...rent**, i.e. not for the second time, as the A.V. would imply.

fell upon my knees] both kneeling and standing are mentioned in O.T. as attitudes of prayer. See Ps. xcv. 6. Spreading out the hands was symbolic of the desire to receive the Divine gifts sent down from above.

6-15. *Ezra's Prayer.*

Cf. with Daniel's (Dan. ix. 4-19) and that of the Levites (Neh. ix. 6-38), two confessions of national sin. *Analysis.* (a) Confession of former sins (6, 7). (b) God's mercy acknowledged (8, 9). (c) God's command concerning intermarriage (10-12). (d) Confession of Israel's fresh disobedience and guilt (13-15).

6. *our iniquities are increased over our head*] the metaphor taken from a flood, cf. Ps. xxxviii. 4. *our trespass*] R.V. **our guiltiness**, i.e. the condition resulting from sin, not the sin itself.

7. *Since the days of our fathers*] See Mal. iii. 7; the phrase evidently means 'from the time when we first became a nation.' *in a great trespass*] R.V. **exceedingly guilty**. *the kings of the lands*] i.e. of Assyria and Babylon. *confusion of face*] i.e. dishonour and shame, cf. Dan. ix. 7, 8.

this day. ⁸And now for a little space grace hath been *shewed* from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. ⁹For we *were* bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. ¹⁰And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, ¹¹which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, *unto* which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness

^{8.} *for a little space*] it was 80 years since Zerubbabel's return. *a remnant to escape*] from the destruction of Jerusalem (Ezek. xiv. 22) and afterwards from captivity (Neh. i. 3). *a nail in his holy place*] See Isai. xxii. 23, 'I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place,' where the prophet refers to Eliakim. Here the reference is to the returned community now once more established at Jerusalem. The metaphor is taken either from a peg fastened into a wall, upon which vessels were hung, or from a tent-peg driven into the ground. The future of the nation depended upon the restored community, the 'nail' fixed in Jerusalem, with special reference to the Temple, 'the holy place,' the centre of the spiritual life of the whole nation. *a little reviving*] for they were still subject to foreign kings, and had not long escaped from the land of captivity.

^{9.} *we were bondmen*] R.V. **we are bondmen**, for they still bowed to the sovereignty of Persia. *the desolations*] R.V. **the ruins**. The Heb. word rendered 'wall' refers usually to a fence round a vineyard, cf. the allegory in Is. v. 5 and Ps. lxxx. 12. *to give us a wall*] the Persian power gave the Jews protection from the nations around.

^{10.} *after this*] referring to the recent guilt of the people in intermarriage with heathen.

^{11.} *which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets*] the passage which follows is found nowhere in the prophets, and it is probably not a quotation, but a summary of prophetic teaching on the subject of intermarriage, embodying also words and phrases from the Law (see especially Deut. vii. 1-3). This explanation

of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. ¹²Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave *it* for an inheritance to your children for ever. ¹³And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities *deserve*, and hast given us *such* deliverance as this; ¹⁴should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest thou not be angry with us till *thou* hadst consumed *us*, so that *there should be* no remnant nor escaping? ¹⁵O LORD God of Israel, thou *art* righteous: for we remain *yet* escaped, as *it is* this day: behold, we *are* before thee in our trespasses: for *we* cannot stand before thee because of this.

x. 1-5. *The National Confession and Oath.*

10 Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down

has led many commentators to think that the whole passage is a quotation from Deut.

12. *their peace or their wealth for ever*] R.V. ...**or their prosperity**...: the phrase occurs also in Deut. xxiii. 6, and may have been proverbial.

13. *trespass*] R.V. **guilt**, see note on v. 6. *such deliverance*] R.V. **such a remnant**.

15. *O LORD God of Israel*] cf. the opening of the prayer—'O my God'—the personal feeling is swallowed up in the sense of national guilt and unworthiness. This verse admits the perfect justice of God's dealings in the past, and expresses the nation's present attitude of deep humiliation before Him. *we cannot stand before thee*] R.V. **none can stand before thee**; the whole nation lay under the burden of guilt. Cf. Ps. lxxvi. 7, cxxx. 3. *because of this*] i.e. this recent sin which the people had committed.

Ch. x. 1-5. *The National Confession and Oath.*

1. *Now when Ezra had prayed...had confessed*] R.V. **Now**

before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore. ²And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one of the sons of Elam*, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this *thing*. ³Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. ⁴Arise; for *this matter belongeth* unto thee: we also *will be with thee*: be of good courage, and do *it*. ⁵Then

while Ezra prayed and made confession. The tense in the Heb. shows that the people were assembling throughout the day while Ezra was publicly making supplication. The 1st person is here dropped for the first time since vii. 27, showing that the Compiler in this chapter is not quoting verbatim from Ezra's memoirs. *before the house of God*] probably in one of the outer Temple courts.

². *Shechaniah the son of Jehiel*] cf. v. 26. But it seems hardly likely that the Jehiel there mentioned was the same as Shechaniah's father here referred to. *there is hope in Israel*] i.e. grounds for hope. See Deut. xxx. 1-10.

³. *according to the counsel of my lord*] R.V. marg. 'the Lord.' The Heb. is 'Adonai' = my Lord (which would refer to Jehovah), but with the change of one letter ('Adoni') this becomes 'my lord,' i.e. referring to Ezra (cf. Neh. iii. 5), which on the whole seems to give the best sense; the alteration is easily accounted for by the known tendency of Jewish scribes to introduce the Divine Name into the text wherever possible. *according to the law*] with reference either to the general prohibition of intermarriage with heathen, or to the special laws of divorce (Deut. xxiv. 1-4).

⁴. *be of good courage, and do it*] lit. 'be strong and do.' The same phrase of encouragement is used by David to Solomon concerning the building of the Temple (I. Chron. xxviii. 10), and by Jehoshaphat to the judges he appointed on a special occasion (II. Chron. xix. 11).

arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that *they* should do according to this word. And they swear.

6-15. *The Great Assembly.*

⁶Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib: and *when* he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away. ⁷And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that *they* should gather

5. *the chief priests*] R.V. **the chiefs of the priests.** The word 'chiefs' here refers to the leaders in *each* of the three sections of the community, i.e. of the priests, Levites, and laity. *according to this word*] namely, the proposal to put away all foreign wives.

6-15. *The Great Assembly.*

6. *Johanan the son of Eliashib*] R.V. **Jehohanan.** The best known Eliashib of this period was the High Priest of Nehemiah's time. See also Neh. xii. (7,) 22, 23, where a grandson of the High Priest, called Johanan, is mentioned, and he may very possibly be identified with the Jehohanan of this verse. But a grandson of Eliashib the High Priest would at this time be a mere child, if indeed he was yet in existence! How is it therefore that a Temple chamber is his at this early date of Ezra's first visit? The best explanation seems to be that the Compiler is here (as on a former occasion—'Artaxerxes' vi. 14) using language of a later (i.e. *his own*) date, and in describing the room which Ezra used, he employs the name by which it was known at the time he was writing. Another explanation is that the Jehohanan here mentioned may have been a different person altogether from the one mentioned in Neh. xii., though one would think that if he were an unknown and unimportant person, he was hardly likely to have had one of the Temple chambers assigned to him. *when he came thither*] R.V. marg. 'and he lodged there,' i.e. passed the night there. This rendering seems preferable to the A.V.

7. *throughout Judah and Jerusalem*] in all the villages and in every corner of the city. *the children of the captivity*] Heb. 'hag-gôlah,' the usual collective title in these two books (viii. 35,

themselves together *unto* Jerusalem; ⁸and *that* whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.

⁹Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together *unto* Jerusalem within three days. It *was* the ninth month, on the twentieth *day* of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of *this* matter, and for the great rain. ¹⁰And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. ¹¹Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

etc.). The proclamation probably took place some little time after Ezra's public prayer, as an interval would be needed for maturing plans.

8. *within three days*] the short interval allowed for assembling shows the limited area occupied by the returned people. *himself separated*] i.e. excommunicated, made an outcast from the whole nation.

9. *the ninth month*] Chislew, nearly corresponding to December. An interval of four months had elapsed since Ezra's arrival (see vii. 8).

in the street of the house of God] R.V. **in the broad place before the house of God**, i.e. a large open court or square.

the great rain] R.V. marg. 'the rains.' This was the rainy season which followed seed-time (cf. Deut. xi. 14) and was known as 'the early rain'; the 'latter rain' falling in spring-time.

Ezra's Address—(a) the offence, (b) the desired reform, consisting of confession and amendment.

10. *the trespass*] R.V. **the guilt**, see note on ix. 6.

11. *make confession*] the Heb. verb so rendered is elsewhere used to mean 'give thanks.' The present meaning is explained by the fact that true confession implies faith and love on the part of the penitent, who thus 'gives glory' to God. *from the people of the land*] intercourse with the heathen around was to be stopped, as part of the general reform, and in addition to the divorce of the wives.

¹² Then all the congregation answered and said *with a loud voice*, As thou hast said, so must we do. ¹³ But the people *are many*, and *it is a time of much rain*, and *we are not able to stand without*, neither *is this* a work of one day or two: for we are many that have transgressed in this thing. ¹⁴ Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all *them* which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us. ¹⁵ Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah were employed about this *matter*: and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them.

12-14. These verses give a summary of the assembly's discussion and decision.

13. *we are many that have transgressed*] R.V. **we have greatly transgressed.**

14. The commission of inquiry was to consist of the princes, the local elders, and the judges, who were to investigate each case as it was brought up from the towns and villages to the court at Jerusalem.

until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us] There is reason to doubt the correctness of this rendering, as the verb in the original is transitive, and the word rendered 'until' probably here bears the later Heb. meaning of 'with a view to.' The whole phrase will then run, according to this theory, 'with a view to turn away the fierce wrath of our God.'

for this matter] R.V. **until this matter be dispatched.** But here again there is possibly an error in translation, and the words according to later Hebrew usage would give the meaning 'as touching this matter.' See R.V. marg.

15. *Only*] i.e. nevertheless. *were employed about this matter*] R.V. **stood up against this matter.** This rendering, which records the opposition to the reforms, is now considered more probable than that of the A.V., which gives the meaning of *assistance* instead of *opposition*. The R.V. rendering is strengthened by the use of the connecting word 'only' (see note above). The four opponents here mentioned must have been the leaders, and they were probably supported by many others who resented these stringent measures of reform.

Meshullam] possibly the same as the Meshullam of v. 29; he may have been subsequently persuaded to yield. *Shabbethai the Levite*] specially mentioned

16, 17. *The Commission.*

¹⁶ And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, *with* certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by *their* names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. ¹⁷ And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.

18-44. *The List of Offenders.*

¹⁸ And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives: *namely*, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah,

no doubt owing to the fact that he *was* a Levite, and particularly bound by his position to support any legal reforms. *helped them*] Jonathan and Jahaziah were the principal leaders of the opposition, Meshullam and Shabbethai their subordinates.

16, 17. *The Commission.*

¹⁶. *the children of the captivity*] see ii. 1. *Ezra the priest*] evidently acting as president of the court of inquiry. His priestly lineage is given vii. 1-5. Cf. also Neh. viii. 9. *chief of the fathers*] R.V. **heads of fathers' houses.** *were separated*] set apart for this special work. The phrase implies that only a certain number of the 'chiefs' were selected (by Ezra, most probably) to serve on the commission. *the first day of the tenth month*] the first of Tebeth, answering to our January. Cf. Esther ii. 16.

¹⁷. *they made an end with all the men*] lit. 'they made an end with the whole (business),' i.e. 'the men that had, etc.' The text is possibly corrupt in this verse. *the first day of the first month*] i.e. 1st of Nisan. The inquiry had lasted three months—Tebeth, Shebat, and Adar.

18-44. *The List of Offenders.*(a) 18-22. *Priests.*

¹⁸. *Jeshua the son of Jozadak*] the High Priest who came out of captivity with Zerubbabel's company. See iii. 8, and cf. also ii. 36-39, with the mention of Immer, Harim, and Pashur here (20-22).

and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah. ¹⁹And they gave their hands that *they* would put away their wives; and *being* guilty, *they offered* a ram of the flock for their trespass. ²⁰And of the sons of Immer; Hanani, and Zebadiah. ²¹And of the sons of Harim; Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uziah. ²²And of the sons of Pashur; Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethaneel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

²³Also of the Levites; Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah, (the same *is* Kelita,) Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer. ²⁴Of the singers also; Eliashib: and of the porters; Shallum, and Telem, and Uri.

²⁵Moreover of Israel: of the sons of Parosh; Ramiah, and Jeziah, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah. ²⁶And of the sons of Elam; Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Eliah. ²⁷And of the sons of Zattu; Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza. ²⁸Of the sons also of Bebai; Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai. ²⁹And of the sons of Bani; Meshullam, Malluch, and Adaiah,

19. *they gave their hands*] R.V. **their hand**, as a pledge of keeping faith. Cf. II. Kings x. 15; Ezek. xvii. 18. *they offered a ram*] Probably this means that not only the priests, but *all* those who had sinned in this matter, had to offer a ram as guilt offering, and the repetition of the phrase should be understood after each group of names in the list.

(b) **23, 24.** *Levites, Singers, and Porters.* The singers are specially mentioned all through these books, and some have inferred from this fact that the chronicler himself belonged to their body.

(c) **25-43.** *The Laity*, classed simply as 'of Israel.' All the houses here mentioned occur also in ch. ii., though the order of the list in the two cases is quite different, and in the list of ch. x. the house of Bani occurs twice, which is probably due to a copyist's mistake. Again, to the house of the second Bani (v. 34) is attributed such a large number of offenders, that it has been thought possible that the names of three other houses have dropped out of the list.

Jashub, and Sheal, and Ramoth. ³⁰And of the sons of Pahath-moab; Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezaleel, and Binnui, and Manasseh. ³¹And of the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, ³²Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah. ³³Of the sons of Hashum; Mattenai, Mattathah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei. ³⁴Of the sons of Bani; Maadai, Amram, and Uel, ³⁵Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh, ³⁶Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, ³⁷Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasau, ³⁸and Bani, and Binnui, Shimei, ³⁹and Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah, ⁴⁰Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, ⁴¹Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah, ⁴²Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph. ⁴³Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zebad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah. ⁴⁴All these had taken strange wives: and *some* of them had wives by *whom* they had children.

29. *Ramoth*] R.V. **Jeremoth.**

43. *Jadau*] R.V. **Iddo.**

44. This concluding verse is full of difficulties in the Hebrew, both as regards grammar and meaning (cf. also the parallel passage I. Esdras ix. 36, 'they put them away with their children'). It is probable that the text here, as in so many places, has suffered from careless copyists. There are two theories about the purport of the verse as it now stands; (1) that it points out one of the great difficulties of such a reform, (2) that it shows how very completely Shechaniah's proposal (*v.* 3) was carried out.

The extreme severity of Ezra's reform needs some explanation, especially when we recall the fact that the old strict laws (Ex. xxiii. 31-33, xxxiv. 12-16; Deut. vii. 1-5) against intermarriage with the nations of Canaan had since early times been set aside, or only partially obeyed. David and Solomon both married foreign wives; marriage with foreign captives was tolerated (Deut. xxi. 10-14); the laws protecting life and property were extended to foreigners (Lev. xxiv. 22), who were even admitted to the sacred Passover Feast if they submitted first to circumcision (Ex. xii. 48, 49); and, finally, the Edomites and Egyptians were admitted to the full privileges of Israelite citizenship, in the third generation (Deut. xxiii. 7, 8). Ezra, who knew the Law from end to end, and

knew also how dangerous were the abuses which had from time to time crept in and stained the purity of the Chosen People, felt that now was the time for a thorough and most searching reform, and that the future of the nation depended on the completeness of the purification he intended to effect. The 'remnant' which now alone represented the holy nation was weak and surrounded by temptations; it must be guarded and fenced in at all costs, if purity was to be maintained; and the present peace and happiness of the many must be sacrificed, if the true glory of the race which the prophets had foretold was ever to be realised.

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

PART IV. NEHEMIAH. CHAPS. I.-VII. 73. NEHEMIAH'S FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

i. 1-11. *Nehemiah's Grief and Prayer.*

1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

[PART III.¹ EZRA. CHAP. IV. 7-24. PERIOD OF HOSTILITY AND PERSECUTION.]

PART IV. NEHEMIAH. CHAPS. I.-VII. 73. NEHEMIAH'S FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

This section [i.-vii. 73^a] is an extract from the Memoirs of Nehemiah.

Ch. i. 1-11. *Nehemiah's Grief and Prayer.*

1. *The words*] R.V. marg. 'the history,' probably an editorial note to explain that what follows is Nehemiah's own writing.

Chisleu] R.V. **Chislev**, the 9th month. There is a difficulty here; for in ii. 1 the events there related are said to take place in the 1st month (Nisan) of this same '20th year' of Artaxerxes, and yet they *followed* those described here. The discrepancy is hard to reconcile, and is probably due to a copyist's error. *the twentieth year*] 445 B.C. *Shushan the palace*] or Susa, the winter residence of the Persian kings, and former capital of Elam. Artaxerxes built there a magnificent palace, of which some (probable) remains have recently been found, including a large piece of decorated portico with an inscription in which the name of Artaxerxes

¹ See note on Ezra iv. 7.

² that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and *certain* men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. ³ And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also *is* broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire. ⁴ And it came to pass, when I heard these words, *that* I sat down and wept, and mourned *certain* days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, ⁵ and said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: ⁶ let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that *thou* mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's

appears. 'The palace' probably was a special title of Shushan, implying that it was a stronghold as well as a royal capital.

2. *one of my brethren*] i.e. a relative, not necessarily an actual brother.

3. *of the captivity*] not the collective noun used in Ezra (Ezra ii. 1), but a word denoting 'the scene or condition of captivity.' *reproach*] the scorn of enemies, see ii. 17, iv. 2, 3. *the gates... are burnt with fire*] the tense used seems to imply a recent disaster (lit. 'have been burned') and can hardly refer to the destruction of 143 years before. Possibly the Samaritans (cf. Ezra iv.) had been forcibly resisting some attempt of the Jews (? led by Ezra) to rebuild their fortifications.

4. *mourned*] the verb for formal lamentation. *the God of heaven*] this Divine title occurs often in Persian inscriptions. Nehemiah's prayer resembles Ezra's and Daniel's (Ezra ix. 5-15; Dan. ix. 4-19).

5. *the great and terrible God*] phrase from Deut. vii., whence probably the opening address of both this and Daniel's prayer were taken.

house have sinned. ⁷We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. ⁸Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, *If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:* ⁹but *if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.* ¹⁰Now these *are* thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. ¹¹O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant *this* day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

7. *thy servant Moses*] 'the servant of the Lord,' a title frequently given to Moses in Joshua, I. and II. Kings, and other places.

8. *Remember...the word...saying*] the reference is to the general tenor of many passages, e.g. Deut. xxx. 1-5, iv. 29; Lev. xxvi. 33, etc.

9. R.V. **though your outcasts...** This verse is based on Deut. xxx. 4. *the place...to set my name there*] R.V. **to cause my name to dwell there**, i.e. at Jerusalem and in the Temple. The whole sentence occurs many times in Deut. but is found in no other book of the Pentateuch.

10. *by thy great power and by thy strong hand*] two familiar O.T. phrases, found together also in Exod. xxxii. 11.

11. O Lord] the Heb. '*Adonai*,' cf. Ezra x. 3. The title is used in poetry and prophetic writings, and also in humble petitions. *desire*] R.V. **delight**. *this man*] i.e. Artaxerxes the king. The last clause of v. 11 should be in brackets. See R.V. *king's cupbearer*] cf. II. Kings xviii. 17, where Rabshakeh = 'chief cupbearer' appears. He was an important official at the Persian court.

ii. 1-10. *The Commission.*

2 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, *in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him*: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence. **2** Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou *art* not sick? this is nothing *else* but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, **3** and said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, *lieth waste*, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? **4** Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. **5** And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. **6** And the king

Ch. ii. 1-10. *The Commission.*

1. *the month Nisan*] The word only occurs elsewhere (in O.T.) in Esther, and seems to be an Assyrian form of the Jewish Abib, the 1st month (March—April). See note i. 1. *the twentieth year*] i.e. 445 B.C. (the year in which Pericles took the lead in public affairs at Athens, and the 30 years' truce between Athens and Sparta was concluded). Artaxerxes reigned 465–425 B.C. *Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence*] Probably Nehemiah at first concealed his grief until he had decided what plan to pursue (for the servants of the king were forbidden to mourn in his presence, cf. Esth. iv. 2) but now allowed his dejection to be plainly visible in order to attract the king's attention.

3. *Let the king live for ever*] the customary formula of address. Cf. Dan. ii. 4, iii. 9. *the place of my fathers' sepulchres*] If Nehemiah was of the royal house, these would be the Tombs of the Kings, as yet undiscovered, but supposed by modern excavators to have been in the rocky south-east side of the Ophel hill.

4. *So I prayed*] this swift ejaculatory prayer is characteristic of Nehemiah; note his habit of prayer all through the book. See iv. 4, 9, v. 19, vi. 9, 14, xiii. 14.

5. *that I may build it*] If Ezra iv. 7–24 refers to the stoppage

said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. ⁷Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; ⁸and a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which *appertained* to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

of the building work in the earlier part of Artaxerxes' reign, Nehemiah is here only requesting the fulfilment of the king's own words on that occasion—Ezra iv. 21, 'that this city be not builded until a decree shall be made by me.'

6. The king's answer is not given, but he evidently granted leave at once, and made Nehemiah governor at Jerusalem. *the queen*] possibly Damaspia. The monuments often represent an Eastern king reclining at table, while his queen sits on a chair at his feet. *I set him a time*] the length of his stay is not given. Some think it lasted for 12 years (v. 14), others that he returned when the walls were finished.

7. *the governors beyond the river*] the Pekhahs on the W. of Euphrates. *convey me over*] R.V. **let me pass through.**

8. *Asaph the keeper of the king's forest*] probably, from his name, a Jewish official; the 'forest' has been identified with (1) the forests of Lebanon, (2) the wooded plain near the coast, (3) Solomon's garden at Etan, six or seven miles from Jerusalem; the word itself (R.V. marg. 'or *park*') occurs elsewhere only in Eccles. ii. 5 and Cant. iv. 13, and is said to be of Persian origin, and was used of the hunting-grounds of the Persian kings. Our word 'Paradise' comes from it, through the Greek *παράδεισος*. *timber*] for building (1) the citadel, (2) the walls, (3) Nehemiah's own official residence. *the palace*] R.V. **the castle** (a foreign word, possibly Babylonian). It was on the N. of the Temple ('the house'), and comes into later history as the fortress Antonia, rebuilt by Herod the Great, where St Paul was taken by the Roman soldiers (Acts xxi. 37). *the house that I shall enter into*] the Governor's official residence; see v. 17, 18. *the good hand of my God upon me*] this characteristic phrase of the two books occurs many times (Ezra vii. 6, 28, viii. 18–22; Neh. ii. 18).

⁹Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. ¹⁰When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

11-16. *Arrival and Night Circuit.*

¹¹So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. ¹²And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I *any* man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither *was there any* beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. ¹³And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before

9. *the governors beyond the river*] i.e. of Hamath, Damascus, and (probably) Samaria. Contrast Nehemiah's armed escort with Ezra's unprotected caravan (Ezra viii. 22).

10. *Sanballat*] an Assyrian name (connected with Sin, the moon-god). *the Horonite*] i.e. of Beth-horon, on the borders of Ephraim. *Tobiah the servant*] perhaps once in the service of the Persian governor, or (less probably) secretary to Sanballat, and originally an Ammonite slave. The Samaritans and all the nations around would gladly combine to prevent the Jews from regaining their old importance in the country, and for this reason to hinder the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

11-16. *Arrival and Night Circuit.*

11. Nehemiah, following Ezra's example (Ezra viii. 32), rested for three days.

12. *at Jerusalem*] R.V. **for Jerusalem.**

13. R.V. **the valley gate**, most probably the chief entrance in the western wall of the city, leading out into the ravine of Hinnom, and bearing rather to the S.W. than due W. The greater number of the excavators now incline to the theory that the Valley of Hinnom was identical with that called by Josephus the Tyropœon, and they thus reduce the size of the whole circuit and the area of the city¹. R.V. **even towards the dragon's well**, probably a fountain associated with the ancient worship of some dragon deity. It

¹ See note on iii. 15.

the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. ¹⁴ Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but *there was* no place for the beast *that was* under me to pass. ¹⁵ Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned. ¹⁶ And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither

has not yet been found by the excavators, though different theories have identified it with (1) En-rogel, I. Kings i. 9, (2) the fountain of Gihon, I. Kings i. 33, and (3) a spring in the Tyropœon Valley, long since dried up, if it ever existed at all. *the dung port]*

R.V. **the dung gate**, through which the town refuse was probably carried. Some identify it with 'the gate of potsherd,' Jer. xix. 2, others with a modern gate bearing the old name. It was probably near the southernmost point of the city, and 1000 cubits (Neh. iii. 13) S.E. from the Valley Gate. Dr Bliss has very recently (1895) discovered a small gate which he identifies with the lost 'Gate of the Essenes' and Nehemiah's Dung-Gate; its position lends probability to this theory¹.

14. *the gate of the fountain]* probably at the S.E. angle of the city wall. Dr Bliss considers he has found this gate also in his recent excavations, and describes it as 'close to much water².' *the king's pool]* probably another name for the Pool of Siloam, whence came the chief water-supply of the city. It is one of the few undisputed localities in Jerusalem. It is not quite certain whether it was originally enclosed by the city wall (temp. Neh.) or lay outside, but recent discoveries seem to show that in very ancient times it *was* within the city boundary wall. *there was no place for the beast...to pass]* the heaps of broken wall and masonry here blocked the mule's path.

15. *by the brook]* the Kedron, whose deep ravine runs all along the E. side of the city, and then curves round to the N.W. Leaving the wall, Nehemiah went up the Kedron stream, probably keeping on his left the long Temple wall; he then 'turned back,' i.e. turned towards the W. (having already reached the N. of the city), and proceeding first W. and then S.W., reached the point whence he had started, and re-entered through the Valley Gate.

¹ Pal. Explor. Fund, Quart. Statem. for 1896, p. 172.

² *Ib.* p. 173.

had I as yet told *it* to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

17-20. *The People's Resolve.*

¹⁷ Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire: come, and let us build *up* the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. ¹⁸ Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for *this* good work. ¹⁹ But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard *it*, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What *is* this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? ²⁰ Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

iii. 1-32. *The Rebuilding of the Walls.*

3 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they built the sheep gate;

16. *the Jews*] the lay population is here meant, as distinguished from the priests, nobles, etc.

17-20. *The People's Resolve.*

19. *Sanballat...Tobiah*] See v. 10. *Geshem the Arabian*] probably a chief of some Arab tribe, either from the S. border of Judah, or from the Arabian colony placed in Samaria by Sargon (715 B.C.).

20. *no portion, nor right, nor memorial*] cf. Ezra iv. 3. The Samaritans seem to have claimed rights in the Jewish community, but Nehemiah declares that no such rights existed, nor had they proof ('memorial') of any such in the past.

Ch. iii. 1-32. *The Rebuilding of the Walls.*

1. *Eliashib*] son of Joiakim, and grandson of Jeshua (Ezra iii. 2; Neh. xii. 10). He does not seem to have been thoroughly in

they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel. ²And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri. ³But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build, who *also* laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. ⁴And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Uriah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana. ⁵And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord. ⁶Moreover the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of

sympathy with Nehemiah later on (xiii. 4). *the sheep gate]*

Cf. S. John v. 2, where the gate mentioned is probably identical with this one. It was on the N.E. of the city, close to the Temple wall, and through it probably were brought the sheep required for sacrifices, from Moab and E. Palestine. *they*

sanctified it] a special ceremony to mark the priests' own handiwork. *the tower of Meah]* **R.V. the tower of Hammeah;**

this has never yet been identified. *the tower of Hananeel]*

R.V. the tower of Hananel, possibly an outwork of the great fortress which seems to have protected the Temple on the N. It stood at the N.E. corner of the city, and between the Sheep and Fish Gates (see xii. 39; Jer. xxxi. 38; Zech. xiv. 10). Hammeah may have been the Eastern and twin tower to Hananel.

2. the men of Jericho] a clan of townsmen so called, or possibly this portion of the wall was 'towards Jericho,' on the N.E. side of the city.

3. the fish gate] on the N. or N.W. wall (xii. 39; II. Chron. xxxiii. 14; Zeph. i. 10). Possibly it was used specially by the fishermen from the Lake of Galilee and the Tyrian fish-merchants.

4. Meshullam] a leading noble, but hostile to Nehemiah's later reforms, and an ally of Tobiah (vi. 18).

5. the Tekoites] from Tekoa, 10 m. S. of Jerusalem, or possibly here the name of one clan within the city. *their Lord]* **R.V. their lord**—i.e. Nehemiah—the nobles of the outlying town of Tekoa may have allied with the Arabian chiefs (Geshem etc.).

6. the old gate] Cf. xii. 39. It stood between the Fish Gate and the Gate of Ephraim, probably on the N.W. of the city, and is perhaps the 'Corner Gate' of II. Kings xiv. 13.

Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. ⁷And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor on *this* side the river. ⁸Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, *of* the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of *one of* the apothecaries, and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall. ⁹And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem. ¹⁰And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabniah. ¹¹Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahath-moab, repaired the

^{7.} *Mizpah*] $3\frac{1}{2}$ m. N. of Jerusalem. See vv. 15, 19. *unto the throne of the governor on this side the river*] R.V. **which appertained to the throne of the governor beyond the river.** This is an obscure phrase. According to the A.V. it gives the limit of the piece of wall restored by Melatiah-etc., i.e. 'as far as the satrap's official residence,' or his 'throne of judgment.' According to the R.V. the phrase is a description of Mizpah, as partly under Jewish and partly under Persian rule ('throne' therefore here = 'rule'). The guild of goldsmiths, being wealthy, repaired a large portion, see vv. 31, 32. Next to them worked the guild of perfumers ('apothecaries'), an important body of artisans in the East. *they fortified Jerusalem unto...*] R.V. margin, 'they *left* Jerusalem unto...'. If the rendering 'left' is adopted, the most probable meaning is that the builders here deserted the old wall which they were repairing, and made a curve inwards, leaving outside their new line of wall part of the old (? uninhabited) city. *the broad wall*] See xii. 38, where it is described as between the 'tower of the furnaces' and the 'Gate of Ephraim.' Possibly it was the portion pulled down by Amaziah (II. Kings xiv. 13), and rebuilt by Hezekiah (II. Chron. xxv. 23). It was evidently an important and additionally strong part of the fortifications.

^{9.} *the half part*] i.e. the commercial district of the city.

^{11.} *the other piece*] R.V. **another portion**; the phrase occurs

other piece, and the tower of the furnaces. ¹²And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Hallohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters. ¹³The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung gate. ¹⁴But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. ¹⁵But the gate of the fountain repaired Shallum the son of Colhozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of Siloah by the king's garden, and unto

six times in the chapter, and probably the list of those who restored is incomplete, and many names may have dropped out. Note that the Gate of Ephraim' is here left out, though of great importance. (Cf. viii. 16, xii. 39.) *the tower of the furnaces*] between the Gate of Ephraim and the Valley Gate. It was the N.W. fortress of the city.

12. *Shallum...*] the ruler of the 'Zion' half of the city. *his daughters*] possibly helping by gifts of food and money.

13. *The valley gate*] see ii. 13. *Zanoah*] 13 m. W. of Jerusalem. *the dung gate*] see ii. 13.

14. *part of Beth-haccerem*] R.V. **the district of Beth-haccherem** ('house of the vineyard'), due S. of Jerusalem.

15. *the gate of the fountain*] See ii. 14. If the theory¹ that the Valley of Hinnom ran down the centre of the modern city (where Josephus places the Tyropœon) be accepted, then the distance between the Dung and Fountain Gates is short enough to cause no difficulty here (see Map), for both Valley and Dung Gates must then be placed on the E. side of the Tyropœon. *the pool of*

Siloah] R.V. **the pool of Shelah**, i.e. Siloam. See note on ii. 14, and cf. S. John ix. 7. It was fed by an underground conduit (dis-

¹ This theory is upheld by Robertson Smith (*Encycl. Brit.*), Sayce, Birch, Schwarz. Also see Pal. Explor. Fund, Qy. St., Jan. 1897, p. 72, 'It has already been proved that the Valley of Hinnom was the central valley at Jerusalem, the Tyropœon which reached to Siloam being part of the said valley.'

the stairs that go down from the city of David. ¹⁶ After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Beth-zur, unto *the place* over against the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the mighty. ¹⁷ After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah, in his part. ¹⁸ After him repaired their brethren, Bavai

covered in recent years) which brought the water from the Virgin's Spring, through many feet of rock, to the great pool at the S. end of the Tyropæon. The 'wall of the pool' may have been an outwork for the protection of Siloam, or the ancient city wall may have taken a bend round to the S. and enclosed both pool, garden, and stairs. *the stairs that go down... etc.*] Two stone staircases have been recently discovered, which seem to fit the description: (1) by Schick and Guthe, leading from the E. of Siloam up the hill towards the Water Gate; (2) by Dr Bliss in 1896, on the W. of the Pool, and running at the base of the Western hill. Dr Bliss, however, concludes his report thus: "As for us, who have the spade still in our hands, we need not trouble about theories till this implement has shown us all it can"; implying that till the excavations have gone further, no certain identifications can be procured. *the city of David*] the site of Zion has been much disputed. Formerly it was generally placed on the W. side of the modern city, usually to the S. end of the Western hill. Now commentators and excavators alike are inclined to place it on the S. of the Eastern or Temple hill; at all events most would agree that its site lay on the E. side of the city¹.

16. *Beth-zur*] 13 m. S. of Jerusalem. *the sepulchres of David*] probably in the S. or S.E. cliff of Mt. Ophel, though as yet (i.e. up till June, 1897) undiscovered. *the pool that was made*] N. of the pool of Shelah, and perhaps supplied by the same conduit. The excavations have laid bare *possible* traces of this pool. *the house of the mighty*] R.V. **the house of the mighty men**. Probably on the site of David's barracks for his bodyguard. See II. Sam. xvi. 6.

17. *Rehum*] Cf. Neh. x. 25. *Bani*] Cf. ix. 5. *Keilah*] about 15 m. S.W. of Jerusalem.

¹ The most important names which appear in support of this theory are those of Prof. Robertson Smith, Sir Charles Wilson, Major Conder, Dr Birch; while Sir Ch. Warren admits its credibility.

the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah. ¹⁹ And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armoury *at the turning of the wall*. ²⁰ After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning *of the wall* unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. ²¹ After him repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah the son of Koz another piece, from the door of the house of Eliashib even to the end of the house of Eliashib. ²² And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain. ²³ After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house. After him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah by his house. ²⁴ After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad another piece, from the house of Azariah unto the turning *of the wall*, even unto the corner. ²⁵ Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning *of the wall*, and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house, that *was* by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh. ²⁶ More-

^{19.} *the turning of the wall*] See II. Chron. xxvi. 9. Probably an important point in the city fortifications.

^{20.} *earnestly repaired*] i.e. in an emulous spirit. With a very slight alteration the adverb would mean 'toward the hill,' i.e. Ophel.

^{22.} *the men of the plain*] either of Jordan, or (less probably) the circuit round Jerusalem.

^{24.} *Binnui the son of Henadad*] probably the same as 'Bavai,' v. 18.

^{25.} *the tower which lieth out from the king's high house, that was by the court of the prison*] R.V. **the tower that standeth out from the upper house of the king, which is by the court of the guard**. The 'tower' probably projected from the king's palace, and the base of such a tower has been excavated by Sir Ch. Warren; it may or may not be the one here spoken of. 'The upper house,' formerly the royal palace, but at this time probably the residence of city officials, was to the S. of the Temple (probably), on the top of Ophel.

^{26.} The R.V. makes this whole verse a parenthesis, cf. A.V. and

over the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto *the place* over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out. ²⁷After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel. ²⁸From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house. ²⁹After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate. ³⁰After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber. ³¹After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the going up of the corner. ³²And

R.V. *in Ophel*] 'Ophel' = a mound: it was the S. spur of the Temple hill, and was surrounded by a wall in Manasseh's reign (II. Chron. xxxiii. 14). *the water gate*] the path from the spring of Gihon (which supplied Siloam) entered here, and the water-carriers entered by this gate.

^{27.} *the great tower that lieth out*] possibly a fort on the E. side of the Temple. Schick places it at the S.E. corner of the wall.

^{28.} *the horse gate*] Probably to the S.E. of the Temple courts. Perhaps connected with the worship of the sun once practised by the kings of Judah, see II. Kings xxiii. 11. For its position see II. Chron. xxiii. 15; Jer. xxxi. 40.

^{29.} *the east gate*] probably the E. approach to the Temple courts.

^{31.} *the place (R.V. house) of the Nethinims*] this must have been the official residence of those in the service of the Temple, while the rest dwelt (v. 26) on Ophel. It was apparently also a bazaar where money-changers, dealers in precious things for offerings, and sellers of animals ('merchants') for the sacrifices resorted.

the gate Miphkad] R.V. **the gate of Hammiphkad**. Schick places it close to the N.E. corner of the Temple, and identifies it with the gate through which both the bullock for the sin-offering was brought into the Temple, and the scapegoat was led forth into the desert on the Day of Atonement. The Jews who came up from the East to the great festivals would enter by this

between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.

iv. 1-23. *Opposition without the City.*

4 But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. ²And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do *these* feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burnt? ³Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* by him, and he said, Even *that* which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. ⁴Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: ⁵and cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked *thee*

gate (or one built upon its site), and possibly Jesus here made His triumphal entry before the Passion.

32. *the going up of the corner*] R.V. **the ascent...** R.V. marg. 'upper chamber.' Two walls evidently joined here, and possibly above the junction there was a room built 'for look-out purposes or as a place of public gathering.' *sheep gate*] see v. 1.

Ch. iv. 1-23. *Opposition without the City.*

2. *the army of Samaria*] i.e. the population trained in war, and now summoned by the leaders of the opposition. *will they fortify themselves*] this verse is very variously rendered by different versions and commentators, owing to the use of the verb translated in the A.V. as 'fortify,' although it generally means 'leave.' Probably a scribe in very early times here made a slip, and the words should run, 'Will they commit themselves to their God?' This rendering is given by a slight change in the Heb.

3. *a fox*] or jackal.

4, 5. *Nehemiah's Prayer*, a parenthesis, most characteristic of Nehemiah's writing. (See *Intro.*, p. 9.)

to anger before the builders. ⁶ So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

⁷ But it came to pass, *that* when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, *and* that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, ⁸ and conspired all of them together to come *and* to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. ⁹ Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. ¹⁰ And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and *there is* much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. ¹¹ And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease. ¹² And it came to pass, *that* when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us *they will be upon*

6. *unto the half thereof]* R.V. **unto half the height thereof.** The excavations show the oldest wall to have been 200 ft. high.

7. A list of the Jews' opposers. See notes, ii. 10, 19. The Ashdodites lived along the coast, and Ashdod was an important Philistine city.

8. *to hinder it]* R.V. **to cause confusion therein.**

9. Note the characteristic reference to prayer.

10. *Judah]* i.e. the Jews collectively. *bearers of burdens]* all the workers.

12. *the Jews which dwelt by them]* e.g. the men of Jericho, Tekoah, Gibeon, Mizpah, and Zanoah (ch. iii.), who lived near the territories of the four hostile peoples. *From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you]* a sentence of doubtful meaning, of which many explanations have been given. R.V. (they said...) **from all places, Ye must return unto us**, i.e. the inhabitants of these towns and villages, terrified by the hostility of the tribes round them, sent to Jerusalem to fetch back their fellow-townsmen who were there assisting the work (iii. 2, 5, 7, 13). This explanation seems the best.

you. ¹³Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, *and* on the higher places, I even set the people after *their* families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. ¹⁴And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, *which* is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. ¹⁵And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. ¹⁶And it came to pass from that time forth, *that* the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the *other* half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers *were* behind all the house of Judah. ¹⁷They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, *with* those that laded, *every one* with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other *hand* held a weapon. ¹⁸For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and *so* builded. And he that sounded the trumpet *was* by me. ¹⁹And I

^{13.} *in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places*] R.V. **in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in the open places**, i.e. armed troops were placed in the open spaces between the houses.

^{14.} *the Lord*] Heb. Adonai.

^{16.} *the half of my servants*] probably Nehemiah's official body-guard, cf. v. 10, 16. *the habergeons*] R.V. **the coats of mail**, more probably these were doublets of leather to resist the arrow points, and perhaps metal scales were sewn upon those worn by the body-guard.

^{17.} *they that bare burdens*] i.e. those that removed the earth and rubbish for the foundations to be laid. *those that laded*] the workmen who actually constructed the walls, and placed in position the blocks of stone.

^{18.} *he that sounded the trumpet... etc.*] a personal reminiscence of Nehemiah's is here inserted in the narrative.

said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we *are* separated upon the wall, one far from another. ²⁰In what place *therefore* ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us. ²¹So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. ²²Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day. ²³So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, *saving that* every one put them off *for* washing.

v. 1-19. *Difficulties within the City.*

5 And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. ²For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, *are*

²². All those who worked near Jerusalem or on the walls during the day, were to lodge in the city at night for protection.

²³. *my brethren*] Nehemiah's own clan. *my servants*] the Jewish body-guard. *the men of the guard*] the band provided by the Persian government. *every one put them off for washing*]

R.V. **every one went with his weapon to the water.** There is probably some early error in the text of this verse, and some statement of length of time seems to have been left out.

Ch. v. 1-19. *Difficulties within the City.*

A stoppage of trade was the result of the great national work of rebuilding, and of the hostility of the tribes around, which the work had called forth. Poverty was therefore rife, and those who had any property mortgaged it for food, or sold their own children as slaves in order to pay their creditors.

1. *the people*] evidently the poorer classes. *their brethren the Jews*] the nobles and rulers, see v. 7.

many: therefore we take up corn *for them*, that we may eat, and live. ³Some also there were that said, We *have* mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. ⁴There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, *and that upon* our lands and vineyards. ⁵Yet now our flesh *is* as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and *some* of our daughters are brought unto bondage *already*: neither *is it* in our power to *redeem them*; for other men have our lands and vineyards. ⁶And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. ⁷Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, You exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them.

2. The complaint of the ordinary labourers. *therefore we take up corn*] R.V. **let us get corn**, a vigorous demand for bread which the A.V. does not clearly express.

3. The complaint of the next class, those who had some property, and were forced to mortgage it. *that we might buy corn*] R.V. **let us get corn**, see v. 2.

4. A third class, those who borrowed in order to pay the royal taxes, and then to repay the money-lenders had to sell their children into slavery.

5. The complaint here is that the calamities, being public, ought to be shared by all alike, and not be made an occasion for oppression, though the slavery referred to was not illegal. See Ex. xxi. 2-6; Deut. xv. 12-18. The Priestly Code (Lev. xxv. 39-41) forbade the bondage of an Israelite. *other men have our lands*] the law concerning reversion of property (Lev. xxv. 25-28) was evidently unknown or not in force at this time.

7. *You exact usury*] See the Laws of Usury, Ex. xxii. 25. (Interest not allowed, but pledges permitted.) Deut. xxiii. 19, 20. (Interest allowed on loans to *foreigners* only.) Lev. xxv. 35-37. (Help to be given freely, without thought of gain, to brethren in distress.) Nehemiah himself (v. 10) had practised usury, but with mercy. The rich money-lenders had become usurers without pity or mercy, and exacted the last farthing, therefore it was well that the whole system of usury should be abolished, and the old strict laws put in force once more.

⁸And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will you even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing *to answer*. ⁹Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? ¹⁰I likewise, *and* my brethren, and my servants, *might* exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury. ¹¹Restore, I pray you, to them, even *this* day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth *part* of the money, and *of* the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them. ¹²Then said they, We will restore *them*, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that *they* should do according to this promise. ¹³Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied.

8. *We...have redeemed our brethren*] Nehemiah had evidently delivered from slavery some of his fellow-countrymen during the Captivity. *found nothing to answer*] R.V. **found never a word**.

9. Cf. this v. with Jethro's words to Moses, Ex. xviii. 17. *walk in the fear of our God*] this exact phrase only occurs here in the O.T.

10. *might exact of them*] R.V. **do lend them**.

11. *the hundredth part*] the rate of interest had apparently been as much as 12 per cent. (as the 'hundredth part' was probably reckoned by month). Nehemiah's demand was twofold: (1) restoration of property already held in pledge by the money-lenders; (2) renunciation of usury for the future.

12. *I called the priests*] to add solemnity to the oath, and in recognition of the priest's judicial powers, cf. xi. 16.

13. *Also I shook* (R.V. **shook out**) *my lap*]—a symbolical gesture to impress his words on the hearers—'lap,' the loose fold of his mantle, sometimes used by the wearer to carry food, etc. *his labour*] i.e. the fruits of his industry. *Amen*] see also viii. 6.

And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise.

¹⁴Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that is*, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. ¹⁵But the former governors that *had been* before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; *yea*, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God. ¹⁶Yea also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we *any* land: and all my servants *were* gathered thither unto the work. ¹⁷Moreover *there were* at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides those that came unto us from among the heathen that *are* about us. ¹⁸Now *that* which was prepared *for me* daily *was* one ox *and* six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all *sorts of* wine: yet for *all* this required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people.

14. Nehemiah paid for his official expenses from his own purse between the years B.C. 445 and 433, during which he was Pekhah.

15. *the former governors*] i.e. Zerubbabel and his successors. *beside forty shekels*] R.V. marg. 'at the rate of' or 'afterward.' A fourth reading is ('bread and wine') 'to the value of, in one day, 40 shekels...' i.e. about £5. *bare rule over*] R.V. marg. 'lorded over.'

16. Nehemiah neither made good investments in land, nor profited by mortgages.

17. *an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers*] probably 'Jews' should here be taken collectively, as the subject of the whole verse, while two classes are specially mentioned in the rest of the verse. *those that came unto us* etc.] i.e. Jews whose families had never gone into captivity, but who had settled amongst the neighbouring tribes, for trade or protection.

18. *required not I*] R.V. **I demanded not**, i.e. my rights as governor. *the bondage*] i.e. the Persian tribute.

¹⁹Think upon me, my God, for good, *according to all that I have done for this people.*

vi. 1-9. *Plots against Nehemiah.*

6 Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and *that* there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) ²that Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in *some one of* the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. ³And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? ⁴Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner. ⁵Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; ⁶wherein *was* written, *It is* reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith *it, that* thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words.

19. *Think upon me, my God*] R.V. **Remember unto me, O my God...** Another of Nehemiah's characteristic short prayers.

Ch. vi. 1-9. *Plots against Nehemiah.*

1. *upon the gates*] R.V. **in the gates**: the huge doors, sheathed in metal, were not yet hung *within* the fortified gateways.

2. *the plain of Ono*] the modern Kefr Ana, six miles N. of Lydda, and therefore nearly two days' journey from Jerusalem¹.

5. *an open letter*] that the public might know the contents, and thus weak friends might be terrified by the charge of treason and prevail upon Nehemiah to go himself and allay the suspicion. Nehemiah's foes wished to get him away from the city and then seize him.

6. *Gashmu*] probably Geshem, ii. 19. *according to these words*] possibly a phrase answering to our 'etc.' showing here that part of the letter is left out.

¹ See Ezra ii. 38.

7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, *There is a king in Judah*: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. 8 Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things *done* as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. 9 For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, *O God*, strengthen my hands.

10-19. *Intrigues within the City.*

10 Afterward I came *unto* the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who *was* shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee. 11 And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who *is there*, that, *being* as I *am*, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. 12 And lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but *that* he pronounced *this* prophecy against me:

7. *prophets*] Malachi was probably one of these.

9. *Now therefore, O God, strengthen etc.*] R.V. marg. 'I will strengthen...' The words 'O God' are not in the text, and this is probably not a prayer, but Nehemiah's own resolution (as in R.V. marg.).

10-19. *Intrigues within the City.*

10. *who was shut up*] the meaning is obscure. The following explanations have been given: (1) that Shemaiah was ceremonially polluted and so was cut off from his countrymen and from approach to the Temple; (2) that he was 'possessed' by the prophetic spirit; (3) that he shut himself up to warn Nehemiah, by a symbolical action, to hide.

11. *would go into the temple to save his life?*] R.V. marg. 'could go into the Temple and live?' Nehemiah, as a layman, was forbidden on pain of death (Num. xviii. 7) to enter the Temple sanctuary.

12. *prophecy*] inspired message.

for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. ¹³Therefore *was* he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and *that* they might have *matter* for an evil report, that they might reproach me. ¹⁴My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

¹⁵So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth *day of the month* Elul, in fifty and two days. ¹⁶And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard *thereof*, and all the heathen that *were* about us saw *these things*, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God. ¹⁷Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and *the letters* of Tobiah came unto them. ¹⁸For *there were* many in Judah sworn unto him, because he *was* the son in law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. ¹⁹Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. *And* Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.

vii. 1-4. *Protection of the City.*

7 Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters and the

14. *the prophetess Noadiah*] only mentioned here. Cf. the accounts of other 'inspired' women, II. Kings xxii. 14; Luke ii. 36.

15. *Elul*] August—September, in the year 444 B.C.

17. *in those days*] i.e. the treasonable correspondence went on during the 52 days of building. Cf. also xiii. 4, which shows that the High Priest was implicated.

Ch. vii. 1-4. *Protection of the City.*

1. *the porters*] whose duty it was to guard the Temple, but Nehemiah here extends their sphere, and makes them responsible for the safety of the city. *the Levites*] already recognised as a distinct body of men; cf. xii. 47, xiii. 5-10.

singers and the Levites were appointed, ²that I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he *was* a faithful man, and feared God above many. ³And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar *them*: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one *to be* over against his house. ⁴Now the city *was* large and great: but the people *were* few therein, and the houses *were* not builded.

5-73. Zerubbabel's Register.

⁵And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that *they* might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein,

⁶These *are* the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babyion had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city; ⁷who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani,

2. *the ruler of the palace*] the governor of the castle (see ii. 8); he was probably general of the city troops.

3. *until the sun be hot*] the usual time was sunrise. *stand by*] R.V. **stand on guard**. All the citizens were to be organised into bands of watchers, each man in turn to be sentinel to his own 'watch,' and every one to guard his own house.

4. *the people were few*] those of the first return numbered 42,360, and Ezra's band about 1500. Yet many of these were not in the city, but had settled in the country and towns round about.

5-73. Zerubbabel's Register.

Nehemiah here gives the list of the first company who returned, which he found in the city archives. See the notes on the parallel passage, Ezra ii. There are very slight differences, caused probably by copyists' errors.

Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number, *I say*, of the men of the people of Israel *was this* :

⁸ The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two. ⁹ The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two. ¹⁰ The children of Arah, six hundred fifty and two. ¹¹ The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand and eight hundred *and* eighteen. ¹² The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. ¹³ The children of Zattu, eight hundred forty and five. ¹⁴ The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore. ¹⁵ The children of Binnui, six hundred forty and eight. ¹⁶ The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and eight. ¹⁷ The children of Azgad, two thousand three hundred twenty and two. ¹⁸ The children of Adonikam, six hundred threescore and seven. ¹⁹ The children of Bigvai, two thousand threescore and seven. ²⁰ The children of Adin, six hundred fifty and five. ²¹ The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight. ²² The children of Hashum, three hundred twenty and eight. ²³ The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and four. ²⁴ The children of Hariph, an hundred *and* twelve. ²⁵ The children of Gibeon, ninety and five. ²⁶ The men of Beth-lehem and Netophah, an hundred fourscore and eight. ²⁷ The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight. ²⁸ The men of Beth-azmaveth, forty and two. ²⁹ The men of Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred forty and three. ³⁰ The men of Ramah and Geba, six hundred twenty and one. ³¹ The men of Michmas, an hundred and twenty and two. ³² The men of Beth-el and Ai, an hundred twenty and three. ³³ The men of the other Nebo, fifty and two. ³⁴ The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

33. *The men of the other Nebo*] 'the children of Nebo' in Ezra.

35 The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.

36 The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five.

37 The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and one. 38 The children of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.

39 The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three. 40 The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two. 41 The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven. 42 The children of Harim, a thousand *and* seventeen.

43 The Levites: the children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, *and* of the children of Hodevah, seventy and four.

44 The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred forty and eight. 45 The porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, an hundred thirty and eight.

46 The Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of Hashupha, the children of Tabbaoth, 47 the children of Keros, the children of Sia, the children of Padon, 48 the children of Lebana, the children of Hagaba, the children of Shalmai, 49 the children of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, 50 the children of Reaiah, the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, 51 the children of Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of Phaseah, 52 the children of Besai, the children of Meunim, the children of Nephishesim, 53 the children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur, 54 the children of Bazlith, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha, 55 the children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Tamah, 56 the children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.

57 The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Perida,

⁵⁸the children of Jaala, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel, ⁵⁹the children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth Zebaim, the children of Amon. ⁶⁰All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred ninety and two.

⁶¹And these *were* they which went up *also* from Tel-melah, Tel-haresha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer: but they could not shew their fathers' house, nor their seed, whether they *were* of Israel. ⁶²The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred forty and two. ⁶³And of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took *one* of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite *to* wife, and was called after their name. ⁶⁴These sought their register *among* those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. ⁶⁵And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy *things*, till there stood *up* a priest with Urim and Thummim.

⁶⁶The whole congregation together *was* forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore, ⁶⁷beside their manservants and their maidservants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and they had two hundred forty and five singing *men* and singing *women*. ⁶⁸Their horses, seven hundred thirty and six: their mules, two hundred forty and five: ⁶⁹*their* camels, four hundred thirty and five: six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses.

⁷⁰And some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work. The Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drams of gold, fifty basons, five hundred and thirty priests' garments. ⁷¹And *some* of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work twenty

70. These gifts are described more fully here than in Ezra.

thousand drams of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pound of silver. ⁷²And *that* which the rest of the people gave *was* twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand pound of silver, and threescore and seven priests' garments. ⁷³So the priests, and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and *some* of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities; and when the seventh month came, the children of Israel *were* in their cities.

PART V. CHAPS. VIII.-X. RELIGIOUS REFORMS.

viii. 1-12. *Public Reading of the Law.*

8 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. ²And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women,

A new section begins with the last clause of vii. 73—"And when the seventh..." etc.—first pers. sing. not resumed till xii. 31.

73. *the seventh month*] probably of the same year, 444 B.C.

PART V. CHAPS. VIII.-X. RELIGIOUS REFORMS.

Ch. viii. 1-12. *Public Reading of the Law.*

1. *the street*] R.V. **the broad place**, probably between the S.E. corner of the Temple enclosure and the city wall, cf. Ezra x. 9. *the water gate*] see iii. 26. *Ezra the scribe*] first appears here in Nehemiah. Possibly after his reforms (Ezra ix., x) he returned to Babylon for twelve years, and only came back to Jerusalem when the walls were finished. Another explanation is that Ezra had failed to carry out his reforms effectually, owing to the opposition of hostile Jews and foreign allies, but that Nehemiah's arrival and energy stirred the people anew, so that they were now ready once more to listen to Ezra expounding the Law. He is not mentioned amongst the repairers of the wall, but may have been included in the High Priest's family (iii. 1). For title 'scribe' see note on Ezra vii. 6.

2. *the law*] i.e. 'the book of the law,' a written code, as distin-

and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. ³And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law. ⁴And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishaël, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, *and* Meshullam. ⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened *it*, all the people stood *up*: ⁶and Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD *with their faces* to the ground. ⁷Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place. ⁸So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

guished from the 'traditions' of the priests. *the first day of the seventh month*] i.e. the new-moon festival of the month Tisri, cf. Is. i. 13; Hos. ii. 11; Hag. i. 1.

3. *the street*] see v. 1. The reading occupied many hours, but Ezra was relieved by thirteen others in turn (4-8).

4. The men here named were probably Levites, *not* priests, who seem all through this movement of reform to have been kept in the background. Ezra was probably for the first time publishing laws which till then had been entirely in the priests' hands.

5. *opened*] i.e. unrolled the long papyrus or parchment scroll.

7. Of these names four occur in the list ix. 5, and seven in x. 9-14. *and the Levites*] probably 'and' should be omitted.

8. *distinctly*] probably means here 'with clearness and precision.'

9 And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, *This day is holy* unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. 10 Then he said unto them, Go *your way*, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto *them* for whom nothing is prepared: for *this day is holy* unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength. 11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. 12 And all the people went *their way* to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

13-18. *The Feast of Tabernacles.*

13 And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law. 14 And they found written in the law

caused them to understand] i.e. explained with comments on the meaning.

9. *the Tirshatha*] see note, Ezra ii. 63. Nehemiah calls himself by the Assyrian title of 'pekah' (v. 14, 15, etc.). Here we have the Persian title. *This day is holy*] i.e. as a new-moon festival, and the day on which the Law had been read. Cf. with this verse II. Kings xxii. 11.

10. *he said*] probably Ezra, or (less probably) Nehemiah, as governor. *eat the fat, and drink the sweet*] a proverbial expression for feasting. *send portions etc.*] a reference to the custom of distributing food on festal days, cf. Esther ix. 19, and perhaps also a reference to the law in Deut. xvi. 14.

13-18. *The Feast of Tabernacles.*

13. *the chief of the fathers*] R.V. **the heads of the fathers' houses**, the laymen, priests, and Levites all apply for further instruction in the Law.

14. *they found written*] Lev. xxiii. 39-43 and Deut. xvi. 13, 15.

which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month: ¹⁵and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth *unto* the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written. ¹⁶So the people went forth, and brought *them*, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. ¹⁷And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. ¹⁸Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day *was* a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.

the feast of the seventh month] i.e. Feast of Tabernacles, see Lev. xxiii. 34, 39, 42.

^{15.} This whole passage is a free adaptation of verses in Leviticus rather than a quotation. *the mount*] i.e. the hill country of Judah. *pine branches*] R.V. **branches of wild olive**.

^{16.} There were thirteen days in which to prepare for the feast. *the street*] R.V. **the broad place**. *the gate of Ephraim*] probably in the N. wall of the city, and (from xii. 39) between the 'broad wall' and the 'old gate.'

^{17.} *since the days of Jeshua*] i.e. the Feast had been observed since Joshua's time, but not with such strict attention to detail as now.

^{18.} *he read*] i.e. Ezra, or possibly it is impersonal, 'one read.' The Law commanded public reading at this Feast only in *the Sabbatic year* (Deut. xxxi. 10), so this was evidently a special and unusual occasion. *the eighth day*] not originally part of the festival, but added later by the Priestly Law (Lev. xxiii. 36-39). *the manner*] R.V. **the ordinance**, i.e. of the Priestly Law.

ix. 1-38. *The National Confession.*

9 Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them. ² And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. ³ And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God *one fourth part* of the day; and *another fourth part* they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God. ⁴ Then stood up upon the stairs of the Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani, and cried with a loud voice unto the LORD their God. ⁵ Then the Levites, Jeshua and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said,

Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which *is* exalted above all blessing and praise. ⁶ Thou, *even* thou, *art* LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things*

 Ch. ix. 1-38. *The National Confession.*

1. *the twenty and fourth day*] i.e. the 2nd day after the great 'eighth day' (viii. 18).

2. *separated themselves*] only true Israelites might take part in this solemn confession.

3. *one fourth part*] the people listened to the reading of the Law for three hours, and then confessed and worshipped for three hours. *the LORD their God*] a characteristic phrase of this section, in which it occurs seven times.

4. *the stairs of the Levites*] i.e. the pulpit or platform from which the Law was read. Probably the names in this v. represent the chief Levitical houses.

5. The names here vary slightly from those in v. 4 and others occur; probably the Compiler is quoting in v. 5 from a different source than that used for v. 4. *for ever and ever*] R.V. **from everlasting to everlasting**, possibly the words are from a doxology then in use amongst the people (cf. Ps. xli. 13).

that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. ⁷Thou *art* the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; ⁸and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give *it, I say*, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou *art* righteous: ⁹and didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red sea; ¹⁰and shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as *it is* this day. ¹¹And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry *land*; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters. ¹²Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. ¹³Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai,

6. *the host of heaven*] probably means 'the created spirits,' not the starry world.

7. *Ur of the Chaldees*] only mentioned here and in Gen. xi. 28, 31, xv. 7, to which presumably reference is here made. It has been identified, (a) with a town in S. Babylonia, (b) with a place in N. Assyria. *the name of Abraham*] the importance of the change of name lay in the fact that it was made at the institution of circumcision, and was a sign of the new relation between God and Abraham's house.

8. *his heart faithful*] phrase taken from Gen. xv. 6. The list of nations in this v. omits three others which are found in the Genesis list.

10. *signs and wonders*] an echo of Deut. vi. 22.

11. The account here is evidently taken from Exod. xiv. and xv.

13. *Sinai*]—not Horeb—(Ex. xix. 18).

and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: ¹⁴and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: ¹⁵and gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that *they* should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them. ¹⁶But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, ¹⁷and refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou *art* a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. ¹⁸Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This *is* thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations; ¹⁹yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go. ²⁰Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. ²¹Yea, forty years

14. *thy holy sabbath*] which had been observed before the arrival at Sinai (Ex. xvi. 23-30). It was possibly observed among Semitic peoples (as in Assyria) before Jehovah set His seal upon it by commanding Israel to 'keep it holy.'

17. *appointed a captain*] see Num. xiv. 4. *a God ready to pardon*] Heb. 'a God of forgivenesses.'

18. This *v.* is based upon Ex. xxxii. 4.

20. *thy good spirit*] God's general teaching of His people. The references in this *v.* seem to be to the narrative of Numbers rather than of Exodus. (Num. xi. 6-9; xx. 2-8.)

didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so *that* they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not. ²² Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners: so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan. ²³ Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, *concerning* which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that *they* should go in to possess *it*. ²⁴ So the children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that *they* might do with them as they would. ²⁵ And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness. ²⁶ Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations. ²⁷ Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them

^{21.} This *v.* is based on Deut. ii. 7, viii. 4; the language is poetical, and not of course to be taken literally.

^{22.} *didst divide them into corners*] R.V. **which thou didst allot after their portions.** R.V. marg. (more probable), 'didst distribute them into every corner.' The conquest of Sihon and Og is found in Num. xxi. 21-35.

^{25.} *full of all goods*] R.V. ...**all good things.** This *v.* is taken from Deut. vi. 10, 11.

^{26.} *slew thy prophets*] see I. Kings xviii. 4; II. Chron. xxiv. 20-22; Jer. xxvi. 20-23.

saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies. ²⁸But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee: therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from heaven; and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies; ²⁹and testifiedst against them, that *thou* mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear. ³⁰Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands. ³¹Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou *art* a gracious and merciful God. ³²Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria

27. *saviours*] i.e. the judges (cf. Judges ii. 16).

29. *which if a man do etc.*] this parenthesis is quoted from Levit. xviii. 5. *withdrew the shoulder*] as an ox refuses to bear the yoke.

31. *for thy great mercies' sake*] R.V. **in thy manifold mercies.**

32. *the great, the mighty, and the terrible God*] the phrase taken from Deut. x. 17. Note a threefold division of the nation in this v.: (1) aristocracy, (2) priests and prophets, (3) laity. *since the time of the kings of Assyria*] In the O.T. Pul or Tiglath Pileser II. (745-727 B.C.) is the first recorded Assyrian king who took tribute from Israel (II. Kings xv. 9, 24). But from the Inscriptions (e.g. on the 'Black obelisk') it appears that Jehu was subject to Shalmaneser II. in 842 B.C.

unto this day. ³³Howbeit thou *art* just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly: ³⁴neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them. ³⁵For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works. ³⁶Behold, we *are* servants *this* day, and *for* the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we *are* servants in it: ³⁷and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we *are* in great distress. ³⁸And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write *it*; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal *unto it*.

x. 1-27. *List of those who sealed.*

10 Now those that sealed *were*, Nehemiah, the Tirshatha, the son of Hachaliah, and Zidkijah,

^{36.} *servants*] i.e. vassals, to Persia. Cf. Ezra ix. 9.

^{37.} The subject provinces *had* to pay tribute in money and in produce.

^{38.} *because of all this*] R.V. **yet for all this**, i.e. in spite of all, we still trust in God's mercy, and make a fresh covenant with Him. Note the position of the Levites in this verse. *seal* unto it] i.e. by signatures or thumb-marks, such as are seen to-day on Assyrian clay tablets. Cf. the summary of history in this national confession with those in Pss. cv., cvi., cxxxv., cxxxvi. Only events recorded in the Pentateuch are referred to.

Ch. x. 1-27. *List of those who sealed.*

1. *Zidkijah*] **Zedekiah**, possibly an official under the Persian government, or a member of the royal house. One theory identifies him with 'Zadok the scribe' in xiii. 13. vv. 3-8 contain the names of the Priestly Houses, 21 in all. The similar list in xii. 1-3 has 22 names, 16 of them corresponding to those in x. 3-8.

2Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, 3Pashur, Amariah, Malchijah, 4Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, 5Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, 6Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, 7Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, 8Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah: these *were* the priests. 9And the Levites: both Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel; 10and their brethren, Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, 11Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah, 12Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, 13Hodijah, Bani, Beninu. 14The chief of the people; Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zatthu, Bani, 15Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, 16Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, 17Ater, Hizkijah, Azzur, 18Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai, 19Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, 20Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, 21Meshezabeel, Zadok, Jaddua, 22Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, 23Hoshea, Hananiah, Hashub, 24Hallohesh, Pileha, Shobek, 25Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, 26and Ahijah, Hanan, Anan, 27Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

28-39. *Obligations of the Covenant.*

28 And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they

In Ezra ii. and Neh. vii. only 4 priestly houses are given, and possibly from these the others had been developed, or else they had arrived later from Babylon.

9-13. Levitical Houses.

14. *The chief of the people*] R.V. **the chiefs of the people**, i.e. heads of houses. Cf. with R.V. for variations in spelling of the names. There are more names here than in the corresponding lists in Ezra ii., Neh. vii. Possibly the number of families had increased considerably since the days of Zerubbabel, but the Compiler used many documents in collecting his material, and these probably did not all coincide.

28-39. *Obligations of the Covenant.*

28. *the rest of the people*] i.e. the 'laity' as opposed to the 'princes and elders'; or the phrase may stand as a heading to the classes mentioned in this verse, which comprise the individual

that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, *and* having understanding; ²⁹they clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; ³⁰and that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons: ³¹and *if* the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, *that* we would not buy *it* of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and *that* we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt. ³²Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third *part* of a shekel for the service of the house of our God;

members of the 'houses' enumerated in *vv.* 1-27. *all they that had separated themselves*] See note on Ezra vi. 21.

^{29.} *entered into a curse*] invoked the penalty of a curse if they broke the Covenant. Cf. Deut. xxix. 12. *the LORD our Lord*] =Jahveh (Jehovah) our Lord.

^{30.} *we*] note change of person, maintained to *v.* 39. Inter-marriage with the heathen had been attacked by Ezra (Ezra ix. 2). See the prohibition in Deut. vii. 3, which is based perhaps on the older law of Ex. xxiii. 32, 33.

^{31.} *the sabbath day*] the details of this prohibition are not found in the Pentateuch, but grew naturally out of the command to keep the Sabbath holy. *the holy day*] see Num. xxviii., xxxi.

the seventh year] this, the Sabbatic year, is described in Ex. xxiii. 10, 11, and more fully in the Priestly Law, Lev. xxv. 2-7.

the exaction of every debt] the debts were not remitted, but their payment was suspended during the whole of the seventh year (Deut. xv. 2). This regulation is not found in the Levitic Code.

^{32.} Ezra and his supporters introduced variations and amendments in the written law. *the third part of a shekel*] Ex. xxx. 11-16 gives 'half a shekel' as the tax, and later Jewish custom confirms this. (Cf. Matt. xvii. 24.) The half-shekel tax (in Exod.) was not originally annual, but levied when the census was taken; later it may have become a regular tax for the Temple services

33 for the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God. 34 And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law: 35 and to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD: 36 also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God: 37 and that we should bring the firstfruits of our

(e.g. under Joash). After the Return the tax was revived as one-third of a shekel (perhaps owing to the poverty of the Jews at that time), and later still, as the nation grew rich again, the half-shekel became customary once more as the annual poll-tax.

33. *the shewbread*] twelve unleavened cakes of fine meal laid on the table in the Holy Place each Sabbath. (Ex. xxv. 23-30; Lev. xxiv. 5, 9.) *the continual meat* (R.V. **meal**) *offering*] probably the burnt and meal offerings ordained for every night and morning. (Ex. xxix. 38-42; Num. xxviii. 3-8.) *of the sabbaths, of the new moons*] see Num. xxviii. 9, 10, 11-15. *the set feasts*] Num. xxviii. 16-xxix. 38. *the holy things*] e.g. the 'thank offerings.' II. Chron. xxix. 33, xxxv. 13.

34. *the wood offering*] needed in huge quantities for the sacrifices. *as it is written in the law*] there is no such law in the Levitical code, so probably the words refer to some 'new' regulation of the priests, not found in our Pentateuch, but added after the Return, when scarcity of fuel necessitated some such fresh law.

35. *the firstfruits*] Ex. xxiii. 19; Deut. xxi. 2-10; Num. xviii. 12, 13.

36. *the firstborn of our sons*] who were bought back (as infants) for five shekels, Num. xviii. 16. *of our cattle*] the oxen, sheep, and goats might not be redeemed, Num. xviii. 17-19.

dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all *manner of* trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites *might* have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage. ³⁸And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house. ³⁹For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where *are* the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God.

37. *our offerings*] R.V. **our heave offerings**, cf. xiii. 5. See Ezek. xlv. 30. *to the chambers*] i.e. the treasury where the offerings were kept. *the tithes of our ground*] i.e. a 'vegetable' tithe, of corn, wine and oil. The far more important tithe (in point of value) of herds and flocks (Lev. xxvii. 32) is omitted in this chapter and in xii. and xiii. The omission cannot be fully explained, though two theories have been put forward to account for it: (1) that Lev. xxvii. 32 records an early pastoral law, not in force when the codes of Numbers and Deut. were drawn up, while after the Return the Jews were too poor to pay such a heavy tax; (2) that Lev. xxvii. 32 is an interpolation later than Nehemiah's time, and added in the interest of the priests. *that the same Levites might have the tithes*] R.V. **for they, the Levites, take the tithes**, i.e. act as tax-collectors. *the cities of our tillage*] showing the tax to have been a purely agricultural one (see note above).

38. *the tithe of the tithes*] paid by the Levites to the priests, see Num. xviii. 25-28. The law of tithe in Deut. differs considerably.

39. *the offering*] R.V. **the heave offering**, includes the 'first-fruits' of the laity (v. 36) and the 'tithe of the tithe' paid by the Levites. *the vessels of the sanctuary*] cf. Ezra i. 9, 10.

PART VI. CHAPS. XI.-XIII. 3. MISCELLANEOUS.

xi.-xii. 26. *Registers and Lists.*

11 And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts *to dwell* in *other* cities. ²And the people blessed all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem. ³Now these *are* the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem: but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, *to wit*, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants. ⁴And at Jerusalem dwelt *certain* of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin. Of the children of Judah; Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of Perez; ⁵and Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni. ⁶All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem *were* four hundred threescore and eight valiant men. ⁷And these *are* the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son

PART VI. CHAPS. XI.-XIII. 3. MISCELLANEOUS.

Ch. xi.-xii. 26. *Registers and Lists.*

The thread dropped at vii. 4 is here resumed by the Compiler.

2. *that willingly offered themselves*] a second class, that of volunteers for migration to the city (i.e. besides those appointed by lot). Six lists here follow. (*List 1.*) Provincial chiefs and others who dwelt at Jerusalem (4-24). Cf. this list with I. Chron. ix. 2-17; both probably copied from one source.

3. *Nethinims*] See Ezra ii. 43, 55.

6. *valiant men*] i.e. able-bodied. The numbers and names given here and in Chron. do not always agree, owing possibly to copyists' errors.

of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah. ⁸And after him Gabbai, Sallai, nine hundred twenty and eight. ⁹And Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer: and Judah the son of Senuah *was* second over the city.

¹⁰Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin, ¹¹Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* the ruler of the house of God. ¹²And their brethren that did the work of the house *were* eight hundred twenty and two: and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah, ¹³and his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two: and Amashai the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, ¹⁴and their brethren, mighty *men* of valour, an hundred twenty and eight: and their overseer *was* Zabdiel, the son of *one of the great men*.

¹⁵Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; ¹⁶and Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, had the oversight of the outward business of the house of God. ¹⁷And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, *was* the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: and

9. This verse is not in the list in I. Chron.

11. *the ruler of the house of God*] possibly a title of the High Priest (see II. Kings xxv. 18) or merely a special officer of the Temple.

14. *the son of one of the great men*] R.V. **the son of Haggedolim.**

16. *the outward business of the house of God*] the Levites acted as judges and officers, and also were responsible for the fabric of the Temple buildings, keeping it in repair, etc.

17. *Mattaniah...was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer*] probably the leader of the Temple choir.

Bakbukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. ¹⁸ All the Levites in the holy city *were* two hundred fourscore and four. ¹⁹ Moreover the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates, *were* an hundred seventy and two.

²⁰ And the residue of Israel, of the priests, *and* the Levites, *were* in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance. ²¹ But the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel: and Ziha and Gispa *were* over the Nethinims. ²² The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem *was* Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph, the singers *were* over the business of the house of God. ²³ For *it was* the king's commandment concerning them, that a certain portion *should be* for the singers, due for every day. ²⁴ And Pethabiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zerah the son of Judah, *was* at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.

²⁵ And for the villages, with their fields, *some* of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba, and *in* the villages thereof, and at Dibon, and *in* the villages thereof, and at Jakabzeel, and *in* the villages thereof,

20. This verse is out of place here.

21. *in Ophel*] the hill to the S. of the Temple Hill. See iii. 26.

22. *the business of the house of God*] the organization of the Temple services and of the rotation of Levitical duties.

23. *the king's*] i.e. Artaxerxes. Cf. ii. 8. *concerning them*] i.e. (probably) the Levites. *a certain portion*] 'a sure ordinance' gives the sense better.

24. *was at the king's hand...*] i.e. (probably) a Jewish official who represented the interests of his people at the Persian court of Susa.

25. (*List 2.*) Towns and villages occupied by the Jews (25-36).

Kirjath-arba] the old capital of Judah, usually called Hebron. The ancient name is here given, probably copied from the 'formal' register. *the villages thereof*] i.e. suburbs and offshoots of the town.

²⁶and at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Beth-phelet, ²⁷and at Hazar-shual, and at Beer-sheba, and *in* the villages thereof, ²⁸and at Ziklag, and at Mekonah, and *in* the villages thereof, ²⁹and at En-rimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jarmuth, ³⁰Zanoah, Adullam, and *in* their villages, *at* Lachish, and the fields thereof, *at* Azekah, and *in* the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beer-sheba unto the valley of Hinnom. ³¹The children also of Benjamin from Geba *dwelt at* Michmash, and Aija, and Beth-el, and *in* their villages, ³²*and at* Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, ³³Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, ³⁴Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, ³⁵Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen. ³⁶And of the Levites *were* divisions *in* Judah, *and in* Benjamin.

12 Now these *are* the priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, ²Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, ³Shechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, ⁴Iddo, Ginnetho, Abijah, ⁵Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, ⁶Shemaiah, and Joiarib, Jedaiah, ⁷Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah. These *were* the chief of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua. ⁸Moreover the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah,

30. *from Beer-sheba unto the valley of Hinnom*] i.e. from the extreme S. of Israel to N. boundary of Judah. This list is probably of later date than the days of Nehemiah, for the towns given are far more numerous than those mentioned (e.g. in ch. iii.) as occupied at this time by the returned exiles.

31. *Aija*] probably Ai.

32, 33. *Ananiah, Hazor*] both names occur only here.

34. *Neballat*] only mentioned here.

35. *the valley of craftsmen*] or a proper name, 'Gehaharashim.'

36. *were divisions in Judah, and in Benjamin*] R.V. **certain courses in Judah were joined to Benjamin**, i.e. were now settled in Benjamin. (*List 3.*) Priests and Levites of Zerubbabel's company (1-9). Cf. parallel lists in x. 3-9 and xii. 12-21; also see Ezra ii. 1, 22. Priestly houses are recorded in these lists,

Judah, and Mattaniah, *which was* over the thanksgiving, he and his brethren. ⁹Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, *were* over against them in the watches.

¹⁰And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada, ¹¹and Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua.

¹²And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; ¹³of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; ¹⁴of Melicu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; ¹⁵of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; ¹⁶of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; ¹⁷of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai; ¹⁸of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; ¹⁹and of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; ²⁰of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; ²¹of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel.

²²The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, *were* recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian.

8. *over the thanksgiving*] R.V. **over the choirs.**

9. *in the watches*] R.V. **inwards**, i.e. in rotation.

10. (*List 4.*) Genealogy of High Priests from Jeshua (10, 11). This list is a continuation of that given in I. Chron. vi. 3-15, which ended with Jehozadak, father of Jeshua. *Eliashib*] High Priest in days of Nehemiah (432 B.C.).

11. *Jonathan*] (see v. 23). Possibly a mistake for Johanan, or 'Jonathan' may have been succeeded early by his brother Johanan. *Jaddua*] the High Priest who was in office when Alexander the Great passed through Palestine on his way into Egypt (333 B.C.). The mention of Jaddua, therefore, shows the compilation of Ezra-Neh. to be later than 333 B.C. (*List 5.*) Heads of Priestly Houses in the days of Joiakim (12-22).

12. *in the days of Joiakim*] probably during his high priesthood the houses of Levites and priests were rearranged.

22. *were recorded chief etc.*] i.e. during those 'days' a register of the heads of houses was kept. See R.V. *to the reign*] R.V. **in the reign.** *Darius the Persian*] most probably Darius III. ('Codomannus') 336-330, the contemporary of Jaddua and Alexander the Great (see v. 11 and Introd.).

²³The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, *were* written in the book of the chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib. ²⁴And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise *and* to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward; ²⁵Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, *were* porters keeping the ward at the thresholds of the gates. ²⁶These *were* in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.

27-43. *Dedication of the Walls.*

²⁷And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, *with* cymbals, psalteries, and with harps. ²⁸And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the

^{23.} (*List 6.*) Heads of Levitical Houses in the days of Joiakim (23-26). *the book of the chronicles*] some official record, not our 'Chronicles.'

^{24.} *the commandment of David*] see I. Chron. xvi. 4, xxiii. 30.

^{26.} This verse refers probably to the list *vv.* 12-21, and was evidently written *later* than Nehemiah's time. Two periods are here mentioned, (a) c. 500 B.C., (b) 460-430 B.C.

27-43. *Dedication of the Walls.*

The 1st pers. sing. is resumed in this section, showing that the Compiler is here quoting again from Nehemiah's Memoirs. Probably the Dedication took place soon after the completion of the walls. According to II. Maccabees i. 18 it was three months after.

^{27.} *psalteries*] a kind of harp. *harps*] a form of guitar.

^{28.} *the plain country*] probably here means the 'circle' of country round Jerusalem. Elsewhere it is used of the Jordan Valley. *Netophathu*] South of Jerusalem, on the road to Beth-lehem.

villages of Netophathi; ²⁹also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem. ³⁰And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall. ³¹Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great *companies of them that gave thanks*, whereof *one* went on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate: ³²and after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of Judah, ³³and Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam, ³⁴Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah, ³⁵and *certain* of the priests' sons with trumpets; *namely*, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph: ³⁶and his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them. ³⁷And at the fountain gate, which *was* over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward. ³⁸And the other *company of them that gave thanks* went over against *them*, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the

29. *the house of Gilgal*] cf. II. Kings ii. 1.

30. *purified themselves*] cf. II. Chron. xxix. 20-24 and Ezra vi. 10. The gates and walls were purified (1) as a sign of dedication, (2) to cleanse the way for the sacred procession.

31. Two processions started (probably) from the Valley Gate of the W. wall, one proceeding N. and then N.E. and the other S. and then S.E. till they met again on the E. of the Temple.

36. *Ezra...before them*] i.e. leading this procession, as Nehemiah led the other.

37. *the fountain gate*] for this and all other places mentioned in this chapter, see notes on ch. iii.

38. *over against them*] R.V. **to meet them.**

broad wall ; ³⁹and from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate : and they stood still in the prison gate. ⁴⁰So stood the two *companies of them that gave thanks* in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me : ⁴¹and the priests ; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets ; ⁴²and Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang aloud, with Jezrahiah *their* overseer. ⁴³Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced : for God had made them rejoice *with great joy* : the wives also and the children rejoiced : so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

44-47. Organisation of the Levites.

⁴⁴And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites : for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited. ⁴⁵And both the

^{39.} *the gate of Ephraim*] not mentioned in ch. iii. It was probably in the N. wall, and the road to Ephraim passed through it. *the prison gate*] R.V. **the gate of the guard**. Its position is uncertain.

^{42.} The names of the eight courses of Levitical musicians are here given.

44-47. Organisation of the Levites.

In this section (xii. 44-xiii. 3) the 1st pers. sing. is again dropped, and the Memoirs of Nehemiah are not quoted so freely, but are used more as an outline.

^{44.} *the tithes*] see note x. 37. No mention here of cattle tithe. *the portions of the law*] R.V. **the portions appointed by the law**. *that waited*] the technical word for the offices of priests and Levites.

singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, *and* of Solomon his son. ⁴⁶For in the days of David and Asaph of old *there were* chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God. ⁴⁷And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion: and they sanctified *holy things* unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified *them* unto the children of Aaron.

xiii. 1-3. *Separation from the Heathen.*

13 On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; ²because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that *he* should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. ³Now it came to pass, when they had heard

45. *the ward of their God*] i.e. the 'charge,' the appointed service or ceremony. See I. Chron. xxiii.-xxvi., II. Chron. viii. 14.

46. Note the preference always given by the Chronicler to "singers."

47. *in the days of Nehemiah*] these words show that the writer here is not Nehemiah himself, but probably the Chronicler, writing some time after Nehemiah's death. See R.V. for this verse. *the children of Aaron*] the phrase (in these books) only occurs here and x. 38, but is characteristic of the Chronicler, e.g. II. Chron. xiii. 9, 10, xxxi. 19, etc. Israel was "sanctified" for the Levites in paying tithes to the house of Levi; the Levites for the priests ("children of Aaron") in the payment of the tithe of tithes (Num. xviii. 26).

Ch. xiii. 1-3. *Separation from the Heathen.*

1. *was found written*] See Deut. xxiii. 3-6. *come into the congregation*] R.V. **enter into the assembly.** The account in Deut. follows that of Num. xxii.-xxiv., and seems independent of that in Num. xxxi. 8, 16.

the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.

PART VII. NEHEMIAH'S SECOND VISIT. [Neh. xiii. 4-31.]
xiii. 4-31. *Nehemiah's Reforms.*

⁴And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, *was* allied unto Tobiah: ⁵and he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded *to be given* to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests. ⁶But in all this *time* was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I *leave* of the king: ⁷and I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. ⁸And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth

3. *the mixed multitude*] i.e. all those attached to Israel by the ties of marriage or commercial interests.

PART VII. NEHEMIAH'S SECOND VISIT. [Neh. xiii. 4-31.]

Ch. xiii. 4-31. *Nehemiah's Reforms.*

At xiii. 4 Nehemiah's own Memoirs are resumed by the Compiler, and the words 'before this' do not refer to v. 3, but to some omitted passage describing Nehemiah's return to Jerusalem after some years' absence; see vv. 6, 7. Between xiii. 3 and 4 therefore there elapses a period of 12 years.

4. *Eliashib the priest*] probably the High Priest of iii. 1, 20; see also xiii. 28. *the chamber*] R.V. **chambers**. They must all have been under his charge. *allied*] i.e. by marriage; probably through his connections with Shechaniah and Meshullam (vi. 17).

6. *the two and thirtieth year of A.*] i.e. B.C. 433. *king of Babylon*] Nehemiah would use this title of the king of Persia because Babylon was the largest city in the W. of the Persian

all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. ⁹Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.

¹⁰And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given *them*: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. ¹¹Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. ¹²Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries. ¹³And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them *was* Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office *was* to distribute unto their brethren. ¹⁴Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.

¹⁵In those days saw I in Judah *some* treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all

Empire. Nehemiah apparently went back to Susa soon after the events recorded in xii. See also ii. 6.

8. *stuff*] Old Eng. for 'furniture.'

10. *the portions of the Levites*] see x. 37, 55 and xii. 44-47.

13. *Shelemiah the priest*] perhaps the same S. as in iii. 30. *Zadok the scribe*] this reference shows the increasing importance of the scribe. Possibly this was Ezra's successor; he seems to represent the 'judicial' side of the priests, while Shelemiah stood for the Temple priests, Pedaiah for the Levites, and Hanan for the singers and porters (see viii. 4, xi. 17).

14. Another of Nehemiah's ejaculatory prayers. *wipe not out*] the metaphor is taken from the sponging of records from a leathern roll.

15. The sin here rebuked was the act of conveyance on the Sabbath, in preparation for sale on the next or following days.

manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. ¹⁶ There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all *manner of ware*, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. ¹⁷ Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? ¹⁸ Did not your fathers thus, and *did not* our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. ¹⁹ And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and *some* of my servants set I at the gates, *that* there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. ²⁰ So the merchants and sellers of all *kind of* ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. ²¹ Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do *so* again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they *no more* on the sabbath. ²² And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and *that* they should come *and* keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

²³ In those days also saw I Jews *that* had married

16. Actual traffic on the Sabbath. *brought fish*] i.e. dried fish from the Mediterranean.

18. A ref. to Jer. xvii. 22, 23, 27. *all this evil*] i.e. subjection to Persia.

20. *lodged*] i.e. spent the night, and traded outside the walls with the inhabitants.

23. *saw I Jews*] R.V. **saw I the Jews**, a certain set of Jews, perhaps seen by Nehemiah in a journey through the S. parts of Judah.

wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, *and* of Moab: 24 and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. 25 And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and pluckt off their hair, and made them swear by God, *saying*, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. 26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these *things*? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: *nevertheless* even him did outlandish women cause to sin. 27 Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives? 28 And *one* of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, *was* son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me. 29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the

24. *the speech of Ashdod*] i.e. the dialect of Philistia, resembling Hebrew, but differing widely both in accent and the use of peculiar words. *the Jews' language*] i.e. Hebrew not Aramaic (see note on p. 28).

26. *beloved of his God*] see II. Sam. xii. 25.

27. *Shall we then hearken unto you*] i.e. 'are we to listen to your entreaties, and allow this evil to continue, when even Solomon—beloved of God—fell through this sin?' An alternative reading is, 'As for you, is it not an unheard of thing that *ye* should thus act, when even Solomon fell...?'

28. The offence was threefold—(1) treasonable alliance with the nation's foe, (2) violation of the law against foreign marriages, (3) defilement of the purity of the high-priestly house (Lev. xxi. 6). *therefore I chased him from me*] because he refused to put away his foreign wife. Josephus relates this same incident, with slightly different details, but assigns it himself to a much later period, that of Alexander the Great. According to Josephus, the exiled Jew fled to the Samaritans and founded a rival temple and priesthood on Mt Gerizim.

29. *the covenant of the priesthood*] Joiada's son, though not

priesthood, and of the Levites. ³⁰Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business; ³¹and for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.

himself High Priest, was yet a possible successor to his father, and bound to maintain the sanctity of a family connected so closely with the holy office. The phrase here used probably refers to the special position of the priests and Levites, as a class set apart for the worship of God, and representing the whole people. Cf. Deut. xxxiii. 8-11. Cf. also Mal. ii. 1-8 with this whole incident.

30. *the wards*] Nehemiah saw that the duties of priests and Levites were strictly observed; he did not himself appoint those duties.

31. *the wood offering*] cf. x. 35. *the firstfruits*] cf. x. 36-40.

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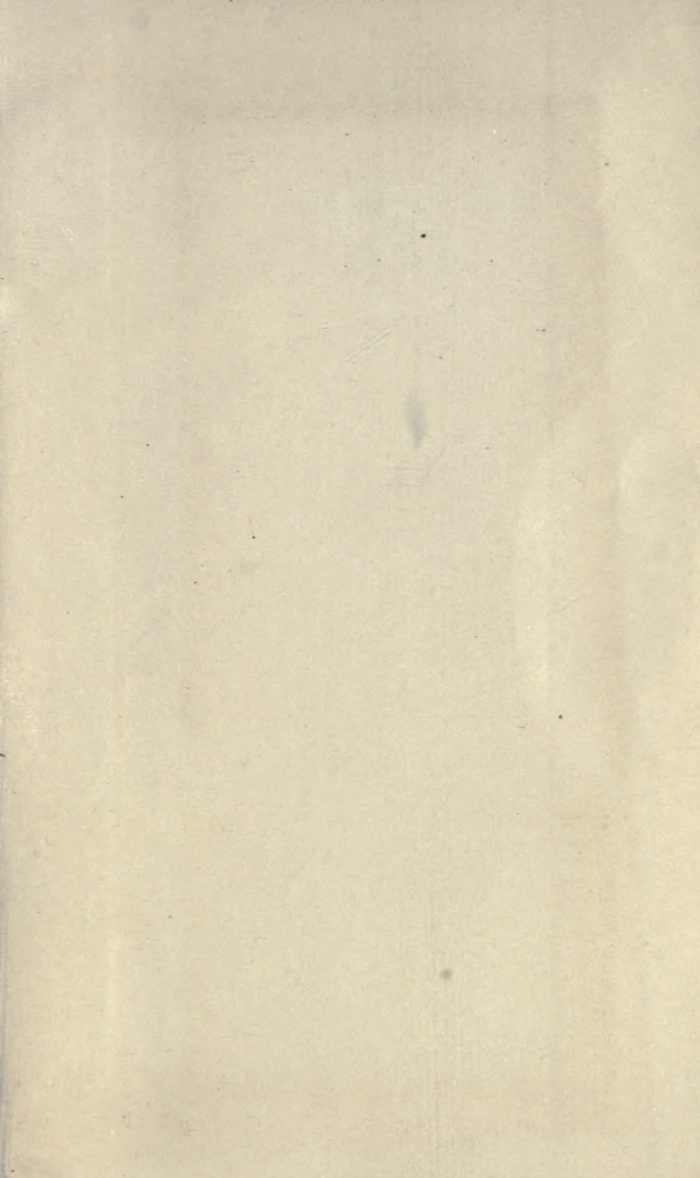
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